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Rousseau for Our Time

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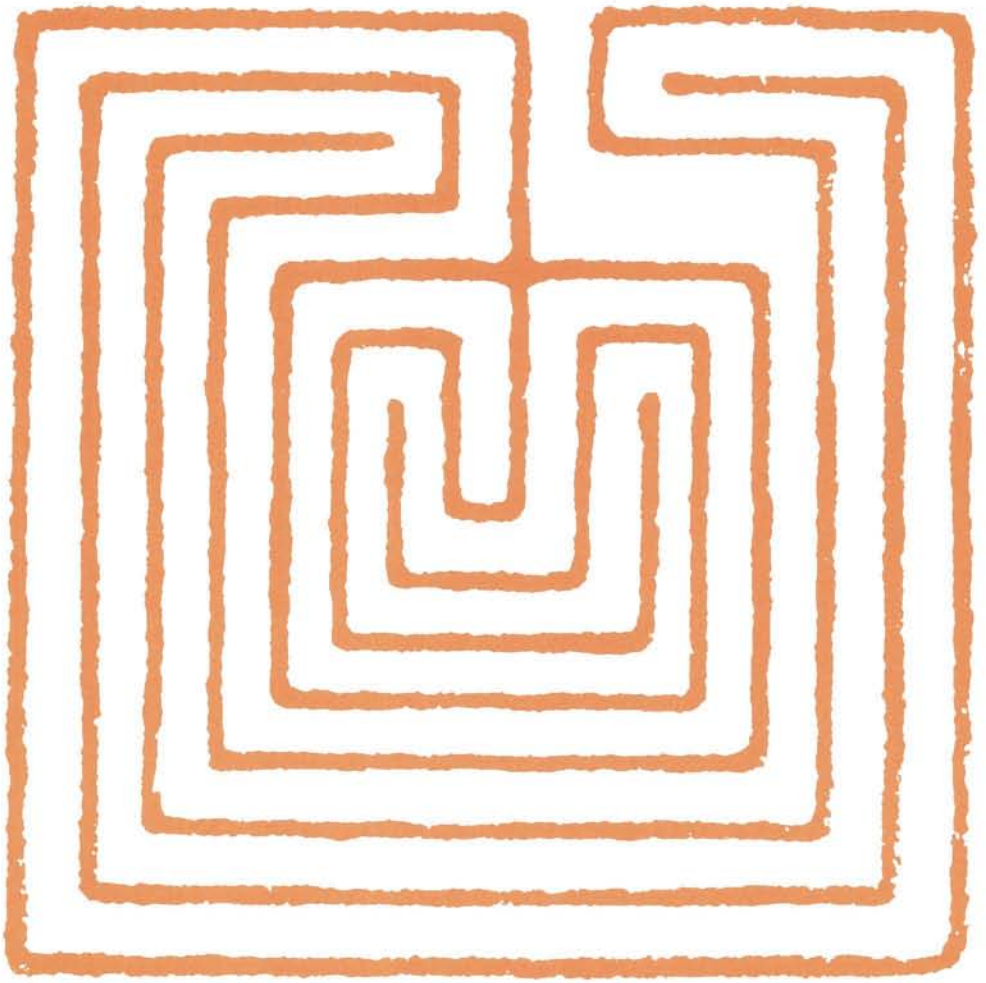

Summer 1978

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Rousseau for Our Time

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DÆDALUS

Journal of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences

Rousseau for Our Time

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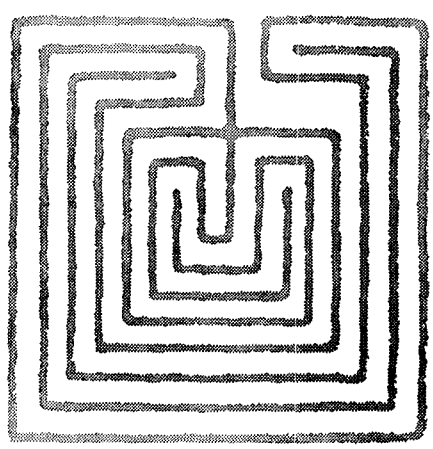

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Preface to the Issue, "Rousseau for Our Time"

ROUSSEAU AND VOLTAIRE, perhaps the two most prominent intellectual figures of the eighteenth century, died within weeks of each other in 1778. Before the editors of *Daedalus* began to consider creating a special issue commemorating the bicentennial of the death of Rousseau, thought was given also to the possibility of including Voltaire. A volume that treated the two men, conspicuous in their day as much by their intellectual and personal differences as by any marked affinities, gave promise of offering a very special insight into an era that has never lost its fascination for our own time. Yet, as conversations proceeded, it became increasingly apparent that many who were pressing for Rousseau were not persuaded that altering the volume's emphasis to include Voltaire would, in fact, contribute to the kind of discussion they were seeking to advance. Voltaire is principally a historical figure, of interest primarily to those concerned with the Enlightenment and with the eighteenth century more generally. Rousseau, while obviously important in the historical context, enjoys another distinction; he, perhaps more than any other intellectual of his century, anticipated an agenda of moral, political, social, and aesthetic concerns that remains preoccupying for those alive today.

The question was not whether one agreed with Rousseau or found his views offensive; Rousseau's uniqueness derived from the fact that he forced attention to be given a whole range of questions that had never previously been thought central. The moral problems of our time—the anguish and the uncertainty—were fully described by Rousseau. In his incomparable rhetoric, he repudiated many of the commonly accepted theories for man's plight; believing his work to be wholly original, imagining that no one had ever aspired to do what he was doing, he scarcely deigned to study the more modest reform proposals of so many of his intellectual contemporaries, which seemed little more than institutional tinkering or naive social engineering.

Though there is no essay in this *Daedalus* issue that explicitly sets out to establish the principal events of Rousseau's life, every essay contributes to that purpose. Because Rousseau's writings are inseparable from his person, it is impossible to consider one without the other. Rousseau's passion, anger, and pity are all recorded, along with his remarkable capacity to invent myths that have retained their credibility for our own time. Rousseau is as alive today as any man now publishing. Though he thought himself the loser in many of his battles with his contemporaries, and was thought an anachronism by many, his "romanticism" has survived where their more "rationalist" views seem strangely dated.

Rousseau's fantasies, however private, are also the fantasies of our own day. His concern with the moral illness of our civilization is linked to an analysis that extends beyond the superficial faults of a specific moment or the failings of individual institutions. While not everyone will accept Rousseau's explanation for how man came to lose his freedom, or what the consequences of that loss of freedom were, all will acknowledge the fact that he pointed to conditions and problems that appear as unresolved and baffling as they were at the time he wrote. Rousseau's greatest distinction, perhaps, is that he saw the significance

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of certain injustices and inequities so early, and insisted on drawing attention to them.

Whether one chooses to dwell on Rousseau's contributions to the study of child psychology, anthropology, education, ethology, or political philosophy, what is important is not that he was the putative "father" of any of these disciplines, but that he saw the relevance of all of them to a larger matter, man's moral sickness. Without using a vocabulary that has become universal only in the twentieth century, Rousseau knew the importance of what we would today call problems of identity and self-actualization; for him, these questions were inseparable from others that led him back to a consideration of how society shaped the individual. These, in turn, made him reflect on the meaning of "community," giving that term a significance it had never previously had.

If Rousseau has had detractors—and they have been many—he has also had followers, diverse bands holding onto one or other of his major insights. Certain of his ideas have translated easily into political programs; others have been less obviously applicable, providing a more subtle kind of political and moral instruction. Rousseau, to an extent not always realized, provided an image of man not as he was, but as he imagined he might be; he believed that the image was not wholly a product of his fantasy, and that it might even be realized.

Today, when there is so much talk about the issue of equality, it is useful to return to Rousseau, to remember again how much he contributed to making this a central theme of secular political discourse. To understand how inequality had come into the world, and to attempt to remedy its many injustices, seemed a wholly appropriate task for one preoccupied with the consequences of moral decay. Many before Rousseau had diagnosed the nature of pity; we are reminded that Rousseau saw the political significance of pity. Indeed, an argument could be made that he helped make pity politically significant. Rousseau saw himself as an "outsider," belonging to no class, yet able to understand all. Deeply distrustful of luxury, sharing a distaste for riches commonly expressed by many classical authors, Rousseau gave new meaning to the systems of domination that such luxury created and perpetuated. Both the rich man and the poor man—and, not least the *bourgeois*—were given new significance by his eloquence.

The concept of marginality, like the idea of *anomie*, was immensely important to Rousseau. He thought himself to be a marginal man, and indeed made himself such, insisting on the distinction even when success and recognition made any such self-attribution a palpable fiction. Rousseau needed to see himself in a certain way, to feel himself in permanent touch with the People. They remained the all-important subject of his concern; they were what mattered. He saw his mission as bringing them to the center of the world stage; they had been on the periphery for much too long.

Many in this *Daedalus* issue speak about Rousseau's style, about his rhetoric and argument, which are clearly inseparable from the themes he sought to propagate. We learn that he feigned innocence even when he showed himself to be calculating. He knew why he used the term *Confessions* in writing his autobiography, and why the work had to appear as a defensive apologia. The man who began his literary life as the Grand Accuser, using the theological arguments of old for new important secular purposes, ended his life in the role of the Ac-

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cused, warding off armies of men seeking to traduce him. Rousseau wanted to demonstrate that another kind of existence was possible, and that the moral life could be attained if only a sufficient effort was made. He was not above trying to make the individual feel guilty for not seeking the better life.

Rousseau's sensibilities are modern. He speaks to the anguish that is so commonly expressed in this century. This is not to say, however, that he has been widely read in our own time, or that those who have quoted him—even in admiration—have done justice to the subtlety of his feelings. Even when he is not read—or is remembered only for his pithy and memorable phrases—a certain interest must attach to someone who showed such resolution before the cacophony of other voices determined to prove his concerns ephemeral, private, and mistaken.

We are told in this volume that an index of the character of an age may be given by the way in which it chooses to read and interpret Rousseau. How do men and women today choose to think of him? What importance do they attach to the paradoxes and contradictions of his obviously troubled life? Are they principally concerned with trying to puzzle out the ambiguities of his prose, or do they ask whether he analyzed correctly the principal moral deficiencies of society, whether he saw correctly the hazards of civilization, and whether his historical, anthropological, and philosophical analyses will, in fact, bear close scrutiny?

One can scarcely imagine an eighteenth-century figure more appropriate for contemporary consideration than Rousseau. He lends himself to criticism, seeming at times almost to invite it. His writings cannot be avoided by those who care to reflect on the moral and political unease of our day. This is only one of many reasons why it seemed so important for *Daedalus* to undertake this study. The Ford Foundation, in helping to support the issue, made all our tasks much easier. We are immensely grateful for their imagination in seeing why such an issue at this time was necessary.

S.R.G.

Note on citations. Rousseau's works have generally been cited in this volume from the Pléiade Edition, using the original eighteenth-century French, which differs slightly in orthography from currently accepted French. For details, please see the references.

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FRANK E. MANUEL

A Dream of Eupsychia

DURING HIS GRAND TOUR of the Continent, young James Boswell was received at Môtiers by the fifty-year-old Rousseau, and they hit it off well. Boswell described him as a "genteel black man in the dress of an Armenian" and in his notes recorded their dialogue in abominable French.

> Rousseau: Sir, you don't see before you the bear you have heard tell of. Sir, I have no liking for the world. I live here in a world of fantasies [*chimères*], and I cannot tolerate the world as it is.
> Boswell: But when you come across fantastical [*chimériques*] men, are they not to your liking?
> Rousseau: Why, Sir, they have not the same fantasies as myself.[1]

Yet this was true only in a very narrow sense. Rousseau holds us enthralled precisely because his fantasies are ours in far greater measure than he acknowledged. The prophet who admonished his contemporaries from on high also revealed their hidden desires to them.

Though Rousseau never composed a proper speaking-picture utopia—neither of the rediscovered-island model named by Thomas More, nor of the religious pilgrim lost in a strange world who at long last finds himself, a type adopted by Johann Valentin Andreae and Jan Amos Comenius in the seventeenth century, nor of the awakened sleeper, a device introduced by Sébastien Mercier in 1771—in virtually all of his works he had a way of falling into the discursive utopian mode. He had read the ancient dialogues on ideal cities in Plato,[2] their criticism in Aristotle, and the portraits of good societies in Xenophon's *Cyropaedia* and Plutarch's *Lycurgus*, and had soaked up Judeo-Christian paradisaical and Hellenic golden-age imagery. He knew More's *Utopia*, Vairasse's *History of the Sevarambians*, Fénelon's *Adventures of Telemachus*, much of the writing of Mably and Morelly. He fell heir to the Abbé de Saint-Pierre's papers on political projects for universal peace and evaluated them with perspicacity.[3] Though he avoided the term in defining his own role, utopia as a concept did not suffer from his sneer as it did among the *philosophes* even when they toyed with it. Utopias were *chimères*, but in his lexicon this was not a pejorative word. Throughout his writings, in the *Discours*, *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, the *Contrat social*, *Emile*, the *Rêveries*, *Rousseau juge de Jean-Jacques*, he delivered himself of fragments—not always harmonious with one another—about an ideal

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world. Since the image was never wholly imparted to his readers in a finished work it is not free of ambiguity, but in the long history of utopian thought there is a haze that lends enchantment. "I offer my dreams as dreams, leaving it to the reader to discover whether they have something useful for waking people," was Rousseau's disingenuous disclaimer in the *Emile*.[4]

Richly endowed with a utopian propensity, Rousseau confronted some of the prickly questions that characterize the Western utopian way in both argumentative discourse and description. The degree of symphysis, or cohesion, that should exist among individuals in society is probably the most deep-rooted utopian problem in the rationalist tradition; in what kind of social unit will this ideal find appropriate expression? What is the place of the ideal world as an age in the eternal passage of time? Granted the crucial significance of sexuality in mankind, what is the optimal pattern of relationship between the two parts of the species? Since education is the key to any society, what is the perfect model for upbringing? What should be the relationship between need and desire? What happens to individuality in the communal utopia? Is there an ideal religious spirit that should be infused into the feeling tone of society? What part of man's nature should by preference be perfected, his moral or his intellectual faculties?

In his rustic utopia Rousseau turned his back on the city, the jewel of Western civilization: "Cities are the abyss of the human species."[5] The myth of the ideal city inherited from Plato had been preserved in the urban architectural utopias of the Italian Renaissance, in the essentially urban agglomerations of More's island, in Bacon's Bensalem, in Campanella's seven-walled City of the Sun. But Jean-Jacques's *constitution for Corsica* knows no cities and conforms to the wild natural world of the island. He searches out a little village at the foot of the Alps in which to enact the drama of Julie's death and resurrection in utopia. The event is unthinkable in an urban environment. Emile can be reared only in the countryside; in the truncated sequel to *Emile*, as soon as the hero lands in Paris he is almost, though not quite, destroyed. In the wake of Fénelon, Rousseau reversed the urban Christian utopia that had dominated European consciousness for more than three centuries. The citizen of Geneva repudiated his citizenship. The Rousseauan longing for a pastoral idyll is not yet dead. Twentieth-century revivals of utopian practice—we have made few theoretical innovations—have fled the city gates and sought a haven in the bosom of nature. In the end the agrarian and pastoral nostalgia of Jean-Jacques and his followers is of interest principally for the history of small, escapist ventures. There is another face of Rousseau, however, that has retained its vitality: Rousseau the fabricator of a eupsychia, an optimum state of consciousness, in a society whose material structures tend to fade into the background. To appreciate the Rousseauan eupsychia the usual mechanics of utopias have to be filtered out. The institutional arrangements for achieving and perpetuating the eupsychia are subsidiary exercises that have bedeviled political scientists for centuries.

Rousseau's eupsychian legacy is the fantasy of a perfectly autonomous, fulfilled "I" for everyman, the wholeness of a communal "I" that is an organic unity, and the integration of the entire, individual "I" with the communal "I" with hardly a ripple on either surface. The amalgamation was achieved in rhetoric and philosophical argument not only in Rousseau but in those who came

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after him, Hegel and Marx. One may be unmoved by the logic of any of their presentations and nevertheless remain profoundly convinced of the continuing emotional potency in contemporary society of the utopian goals they posed. On the anniversary of Rousseau's death it seems fitting to reevoke them, since it was his magical speech that articulated these fantasies in enduring form. They have seeped into the atmosphere in which we live and breathe. Rousseau's utopian "I" has been embraced by a branch of psychology and has been spread about in multiple versions; the communal "I" is a political dogma taught over half the globe; and their fusion is part of a world revolutionary credo.

The eloquent diagnostic pronouncements of Jean-Jacques, grand doctor of the soul, if not his rhetorical remedies, can still intoxicate. The first book of More's *Utopia* depicts the state of antiutopia, sixteenth-century England; and the eighteenth century developed a magnificent vocabulary for portraying the antiutopia of contemporary civilization, to which the utopia offered an alternative. Others had preceded Rousseau in analyzing the *mal moral;* but once he spoke, the minor prophets who succeeded him could not free themselves from his spell. His words reverberate in documents as diverse as the writings of Kant and the youthful correspondence of Babeuf, not to speak of Dom Deschamps, Restif de la Bretonne, the Marquis de Sade, Mercier, William Godwin, and Marx. After two hundred years the Rousseauan antiutopia has lost nothing of its intensity and pungent irony.

Rousseau delineates the healthy psychological attributes of man in a hypothetical state of nature and, as a prelude to unveiling his psychic utopia, bears testimony to the anguish of the present "*difforme contraste*" of passion that thinks it is reasoning and of understanding gone mad.[6] In the world of today, Rousseau declaims, human feelings, words, and actions are in flagrant contradiction with one another. Action was once in measured balance with primitive desire; now action and desire are in complete imbalance; in a future ideal condition—if it is ever achieved—action will mirror only real desire. Without benefit of Vico, Rousseau knew that alterations in language followed revolutions in morals and communicated the radically different psyches of successive ages. The emotive cry of primitive language was not dissociated from its object; in the miserable intermediary present state, the disjuncture between speech and object is total; in the future, language will again be related to its object. It is in talk about emotions that the current disarray is glaringly evident. No man of feeling can remotely comprehend what people in Paris salons, with their society jargon, are chattering about. The characters of *La Nouvelle Héloïse* speak the straightforward language of passion of another world, whatever the consequences. In their utopia of Clarens the five protagonists sometimes even return to the silence of the state of nature, when creatures communicated without speech.

In the *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*, Rousseau exposes the folly and brutality of societal man. Since he has no spontaneous feeling of sympathy for a fellow-creature in distress to drive him to his aid, he can reason himself into quiescence under the bed covers at night instead of responding to a cry for help. Preening himself with all manner of social graces, fripperies, arts, scientific pretensions, which are merely the means of accentuating his inequality with other men, he has developed complicated institutions, above all a property sys-

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tem, and has accumulated riches that are concentrations of his self-esteem and that perpetuate his sense of superiority. He needs the constant stimulation of strong drink and sumptuous food; at the same time his existence passes in continual fear of countless illnesses. In unending anxiety, he dies a thousand deaths. The distracted creature, man in present society, is wracked by frustrated passions that render him an enemy to himself. Though born free, he is straightaway swaddled in rags, denied the natural desire for his mother's milk, enchained by the prohibitions of adults' rules, fettered by false social restrictions, and finally wrapped up again and shut into a coffin.

The lament on the human condition in antiutopia is a foil for the euphoric ballad of the *moi* and the *moi commun*.

The beginning of awareness of the "I" goes back to the dawn of consciousness in mankind, and scholarly essays have attempted to render into modern languages what this "I" signified. But only since the seventeenth century has a vocabulary been created which, while its matrix is a religious idea of the soul and the weighing of its worth in a final judgment by God, assumes a secular form and grapples with the potentialities as well as the reality of the "I." Jean-Jacques Rousseau was one of the fashioners of the language of the ideal "I." In the *Emile* he offered the perplexed detailed guidance on how to mold the complete *moi* from birth through marriage in a series of stages. The vision on the road to Vincennes was an apparition of this *moi* abstracted from Rousseau's society, purified of its dross. In *Rousseau juge de Jean-Jacques*, he defined the moral character of the *moi* in a *monde idéal*—the phrase is his. In the *Confessions* he narrated the trials of a *moi*—Jean-Jacques himself—that, while far from perfect, had come through the ordeal of living as well as a man could in this vale of tears. The adoring letters written him by contemporaries testify that they were trying to absorb a bit of that ideal virtuous *moi* into their own souls by consulting him, reading his books, loving and worshiping him from afar. The *imitatio Rousseau* was a way of advancing toward the wholeness of the *moi*.

Instead of the *cogito*, a secret voice of conscience present within a man was emotional witness to the existence of his "I." To discover conscience, to ward off its corrupters, to nurture its spontaneous movements was the active way to create a good *moi* with a good and capable will. The seed of this *moi* was in everyman, but wicked, evil, enticing, vicious creatures were capable of destroying its goodness, robbing it of its natural virtue and humaneness. If these many-shaped bogeys were to be encapsulated into one terrifying monster, it would be the craving heads of desire that had far outstripped real, authentic human need and capacity. Contentment of the *moi* does not mean the death of desire or the enfeeblement of passion. But the passions had to be so trained that they would not exceed the needs and faculties of the particular unique *moi* of each stage in the life cycle of every individual: the infinitude of desire, competition in desires and their satisfaction, the desire that recognizes no limits, have to be curbed from early childhood on. The education of Emile is a contest between pupil and master in which the ultimate triumph makes the child and the man desire no more than he is capable of fulfilling by himself for himself. If the world of the child is circumscribed by the extent of his natural curiosity, the harmony of desire and need will be perfect. And the child is the prototype of the ideal man. The conquest of a child's immediate world of objects, the alleviation of real

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bodily pain—these are examples of authentic needs that have priority and are illustrative of what constitutes real need in the man. The growth of conscience, which in the end means natural empathy with a fellow-creature's pain, is readily fostered by example. And only when the moral capacity is formed is the reasoning capacity to be developed—but never beyond necessity. By the time the boy reared under Rousseau's system reaches manhood, the accord between desire and need is perfect. We do not quite know what the limits of our faculties are, and Rousseau is not thinking in terms of some mathematical absolute. The moral, however, is reasonably sustained. If Emile or mankind or a nation or a world civilization lives in a fantasy of desire far outstripping its needs and its faculties, it courts moral disaster.

The ideal *moi* has harmoniously educated manual and mental powers; it cannot conceive of luxuria; it is autonomous, entire, whole. It lives fully and totally within the bounds of time and space that happen to be its environment. Identity, the consciousness of self, grows like a plant. Once it is fashioned, man can preserve that self whatever the vicissitudes of fortune. The limitless development of the ideal *moi* in scientific knowledge and the quest for unending novelty only deprive the *moi* of the immediacy of joy in the present. Rousseau had a grave suspicion of the pleasures of dominion, either over persons or over nature. The intellectual pleasure of scientific curiosity was forthrightly rejected—Rousseau did not even bother to argue the point seriously. It was Auguste Comte in his second career as High Priest of Humanity who took a similar position a century later and gave "physiological" reasons for the superiority of an expansive, sentient *moi* over the rationalist *moi* dedicated to scientific inquiry.

In Western culture the quest for the *moi* had assumed a form that was probably closest to Rousseau's ideal in the paideia of the Moravian bishop Comenius, who had it from the Swabian Lutheran pastor Andreae. There was a spark of divinity in every man and to nurture it, to make it glow to the uttermost limits of each man's and woman's faculties, was a Christian mission. ("Development of capacities" was the phrase into which the process was translated in nineteenth-century Saint-Simonian and Marxist language.) Human beings living in the world had to be well equipped with a knowledge of things both for the sake of utility and for the glorification of God the Creator of things. In rebellion against rote learning and abstract formulas, the pansophic utopians had hoped that men who would know real things rather than mere words would be universally united in language, thought, belief, even theology. They would be joined in knowledge and love, with emphasis upon knowledge that perfected moral behavior in a Christian society. There was to be no futile knowledge, no science whose immediate utility was not apparent. Differences in the character of children and men were recognized as reflecting the infinite creativity of the Divine and they were respected, within the fixed bounds of Protestant rules of conduct whose moral content was self-evident. Each stage in the ideal educational process, Comenius had taught, was to be in large measure sufficient unto itself. Rousseau wrote in the *Emile:* "Each age, each stage of life, has its appropriate perfection, the sort of maturity that is fitting for it."[7] The education of the ideal *moi* in the *Emile,* which begins with the concrete objects of the natural environment and has a program appropriate for each successive stage, is a further elaboration of this pansophist vision, though Jean-Jacques introduced a crucial new

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element. "Perfectibility" has been a tragic attribute of mankind when defined in terms of science, technology, and the amassing of unnecessary objects. But there is another way. Rousseau's kind of expansion of the *moi* allows for the raising of emotional, rather than rationalist, consciousness to a higher level.

In *Rousseau juge de Jean-Jacques* Rousseau presented the final version of a dream of the *moi* he had rehearsed time and again throughout his life. Here was unfolded the vision of the moral and emotional nature of the "I" in a *monde idéal* populated by men who had achieved complete identities, the wholeness of the *moi.* He offered a glimpse of this world in action. Rousseau the protagonist called upon *le français* to imagine an ideal world similar to the one he lived in, yet very different—a passing good definition of utopia. The physical nature of the earth remains fundamentally unchanged; but the emotions of all its inhabitants are mysteriously heightened, the arrangement of things is more perfect, forms are more elegant, colors brighter, odors more subtle. All objects excite admiration. Without benefit of psychedelic drugs Rousseau conjures up a world of nature so strikingly beautiful that it alters the human beings who dwell in it. Instead of the suspicious, cruel, plotting creatures familiar to us, men are suddenly aglow with love for one another. The source of the metamorphosis is nature itself. Men are inspired to place themselves in harmony with its glories and are fearful only lest their presence contaminate it.[8]

As among Rousseau's contemporaries, the passions are still the driving forces behind a man's action in the *monde idéal;* but passions have become simpler, purer, livelier, and more ardent. Even in the benighted creatures of present society, original impulses are good and are directed toward self-preservation and happiness. But in the world of today, these spontaneous initial feelings bump up against a thousand obstacles as they seek fulfillment, and they are diverted from their straight path. The emotions become so tangled in their circuitous attempts to overcome the impediments in their way that they never reach their destination, and men forget what the object of their desire was in the first place. A cumbersome accumulation of irrelevant social artificialities makes them lose sight of what track they are pursuing.

The soul of the *moi,* the seat of its will, has grown soft and weak so that it is only feebly responsive to the "impulse of nature." As a consequence, when it hits its first obstacle, the will is sharply deflected from its original purpose—Rousseau uses the image of a billiard ball striking a wall and moving off at an angle. But in the *monde idéal* men have strong, willful souls and are like balls shot out of a cannon: they fly straight and either overcome the obstacles they aim at or are shattered by them.[9] If the soul obeys natural passion it is either victorious or it perishes. In this our miserable world men sidestep objects so often that they may finally end up somewhere relatively safe, but it is somewhere else, far from the place they had set out for.

The inhabitants of the ideal world preserve their bonds with nature and their souls have therefore lost nothing of their original vigor. If the soul follows the dictates of the elemental passions, it is preoccupied only with objects that concern *amour de soi,* love of self, a desire for self-preservation, and such feelings are, paradoxically, naturally loving and gentle. But man in his present wretched estate, living in a world overcrowded with superfluous objects, becomes obsessed with the things that stand in the way of his desire to the point where the ultimate goal is lost sight of and the feelings themselves turn irascible and hat-

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ing. Thus the primal emotion of love of self, which is good and absolute and self-moved, gets transformed into *amour-propre*, self-esteem, a feeling derived from comparison with others, a relative, reactive emotion. The man of self-esteem no longer desires a thing for itself, but covets what belongs to someone else in order to outdo and surpass him. He has only preferences, not genuine desires, and fundamentally he no longer wants anything for the direct, unalloyed pleasure an object itself brings, but seeks it only for the loathsome satisfaction of depriving and injuring someone else.

The *monde idéal* is a utopia of passionate desire of the ego, emancipated from spurious, adventitious needs and from desires not freely generated by the self in its wholeness but merely responsive to the rules of emulation. Rousseau's moral critique speaks to us today as directly and forcefully as it did to his contemporaries. The inhabitants of his ideal world, while primarily animated by love of self, have expansive souls and can embrace many persons. Unmoved by appearances, "they pass their lives in enjoyment, doing each day what seems good for themselves and right for their fellows, without regard to the judgment of men and the caprices of opinion."[10] As he contemplated the decadence of his own society Rousseau found the telltale symptom of its disease in the loss of any strength of passion. Strong feelings were not easily deflected from their course; feeble ones were. His contrast between two lovers, one ardent, the other cool, was a homely illustration of the point. Both would hate a rival—that was natural—but the quality of their hatred would be substantially different. The indifferent lover would become obsessed with his rival, and after his love had waned and vanished he would hate the competitor even more violently than before because his love was intimately bound up with self-esteem. On the other hand, the ardent lover hated his rival only because he loved, and when he had ceased to love, his hatred would be dissipated. The inhabitants of Rousseau's ideal world were like the true lover; his contemporaries, the false one. Frenchmen, cool and artificial—he had in mind the fashionable type known as the *petit maître*—even when moved by passions, experienced only secondary and derivative, not primary, emotions. A century later Friedrich Nietzsche would still be fascinated by a similar moral dichotomy, which he translated into a contrast between the scheming slave-person, the man of *ressentiment*, and the spontaneous, open, noble extrovert. As late as the summer of 1936 both Rousseau and Nietzsche, excerpted in chapbooks, figured among the idols of the Spanish anarchosyndicalists.

It may be, Rousseau concedes, that in the ideal world men in general would not be more virtuous than we are today, but they would love virtue more. Given their headstrong passions, they might commit crimes out of desire and love of self; but since their souls were sound and unsullied, they would know what true virtue was. Men in the ideal world would be constantly forced to combat their potent evil passions and they might ultimately succumb to them, exhausted by the struggle. But such an occasional defeat would occur in spite of their strong wills. They were not capable of willing anyone harm, of feeling envenomed hatred and envy, of treachery or deception. Such men, even if guilty of *crimes passionnels*, were not wicked.

The utopia of the independent fulfilled *moi* is Rousseau's most popular message to the modern world. Its existence is so pervasive an assumption in Western society that any educator who challenged it as an ideal would be forthwith

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banished. The Rousseauan "I" is alive in the rhetoric of the present-day quest for identity, in a whole series of theses about total self-actualization from Marx through Maslow. "Actualization," of course, has a way of changing its direction: for Marx its content was scientific and aesthetic creativity, while for Marcuse it has become primarily aesthetical and sexual. The essential content for Rousseau's *moi* was still moral conscience, religious wonderment, and emotional candor.

Perhaps the longing for a Rousseauan *moi* can be partially satisfied in modern society by those who cheat a little and find their individual way amid the complexity and variety of a scientific-technological world, even as Jean-Jacques fancied that he had preserved his *moi* more or less intact by fleeing the backbiting world of the Parisian *philosophes.* He could pretend to himself that he was a free *moi,* he could in his fantasy live as a *moi* dependent upon no one and, for all his miseries and wrongdoings, present himself as a man of virtue in an evil world. He was at least a shadow of what a *moi* could be. But what of the other Western utopian feeling, the yearning for a *moi commun* that Rousseau made the cornerstone of a "political theory" which promised to provide justification for the existence of the State? The fantasy of the *moi,* when it encounters the equally potent dream of a *moi commun,* a new state of social being, may be difficult of fulfillment. The demands made by the *moi commun,* even if hidden or camouflaged, are absolute and compelling. And if the grasping for the *moi commun* is superficially appeased in ways that Rousseau would have condemned as societal frauds and artifices, the *moi* is betrayed to its innermost depths.

The degree of potency with which to invest community feeling was perhaps the oldest of controversies in the rational Hellenic discourse on ideal states, fundamental to Aristotle's critique of the *Republic.* In the *Contrat social,* Rousseau, in the Platonic rather than the Aristotelian chain, reserves nothing for the individual away from the Platonic integral whole. In the sixth chapter of Book I, he dramatizes the revolution of the compact, when in a moment the individual loses his private being and the act of association creates a "collective moral body . . . which by this same act acquires its unity, its *moi commun,* its life, and its will."[11] He wrote out a formula in the *Emile* for eliminating any antagonism between the *moi* and the *moi commun:* "Natural man is all for himself. He is the numerical unity, the absolute whole, that has no relationship but with himself or his like. Civil man is only a fraction of a unit that depends upon the denominator; its value lies in the relationship with the whole, which is the social body. Good social institutions are those that are best able to change man's nature, to take away his absolute existence in order to give him a relative one and to translate the *moi* into a communal unity, with the result that each individual no longer thinks of himself as one, but as part of the unity, and has feelings only in the whole."[12]

Rousseau's arithmetical imagery is only partially successful, but his idea of the *moi commun* persisted and has been reiterated by a whole line of powerful thinkers who invented different phraseology for the conception. Dom Deschamps, the strange Benedictine author of a communist and primitivist utopia, *Le Vrai système,* with whom Rousseau conducted a mild intellectual flirtation in the 1760s, distinguished with scholastic subtlety between *le tout,* which was still a composite of parts, and *tout,* a whole, whose existence he raised to a law of the

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social order of the same universality as gravity. Movement to *tout* that was a whole was the destiny of man. Fourier invented a passion, though it was only one among many, that he called unityism, and it was to pervade the Phalanstery. The Saint-Simonians alternately wrote of a new Christianity, interpreting the Gospel in Rousseau's spirit, and of *amour* as a unifying force that through time was constantly enlarging its orbit from family to tribe to nation until it would encompass all of humanity with the same intensity that was once restricted to the intimacy of the family. Young Marx wanted a fully developed, well-rounded, sensate *moi ("der tief allsinnige Mensch")*[13] completely aware of itself and its uniqueness, and at the same time a *moi commun* that was not a mere numerical majority but a will expressive of the essence of the human, an organism in which everyman participated without consciousness of his separateness. The collective unity of a certain type of communist theory is the fulfillment of a Rousseauan fantasy, and so is the glorification of *Gemeinschaft* in late nineteenth-century German sociology.

Despite their affinities, Rousseau's solution to the predicament of man, who needs to find his entire self and at the same time to lose it in an authentic *moi commun*, could not satisfy completely either the Dom Deschamps or the Condorcet-Marx type of social theorist. In Jean-Jacques's evocation of the spirit of the collective *moi*, its religious emotion, its love, so perfectly merged the "I" in the *moi commun* that degrees of wealth and status were not felt. But in one tradition stemming from the theory of the *moi commun*, the organismic whole required absolute equality. This was the direction in which Dom Deschamps was trying to pull Rousseau. Without absolute equality there would be envy and the wholeness of the whole could never be achieved. Dom Deschamps judged Rousseau's *moi commun* inadequate and told him so: it was not enough of a whole, since private property and the family prevented the creation of real, total community. Babeuf moved along the same path, drawing the implications of Rousseau's two *Discourses* to their extreme conclusion, prepared to abolish altogether whatever was in short supply, to sacrifice all arts and sciences in order to create the ideal symphysis. Marx was very reluctant to accept the Babouvist *égalité réelle*, with its basis in scarcity, its downgrading of man's cultural heritage and capacities. He postponed this equality for the higher stage of communism, when humankind would presumably have reached an advanced material and intellectual level.

The harmony of the Rousseauan vision was irreparably disrupted by the spread of science and technology, when desire became dynamic and infinite and was virtually identified with need. Rousseau never seriously engaged with science and technology, despite the fulminations of the *First Discourse*. Keeping up with burgeoning desire became a critical utopian problem, entailing a constant theoretical reordering of economic and political systems. Following in the path of Condorcet, Saint-Simon, the Saint-Simonians, and Marx hailed the dynamism of desire for new sensate objects and for infinite knowledge. They were committed to a dynamic growth of needs and desires forever, generating what Rousseau would have considered constant imbalance and unhappiness. Rousseau knew that disequilibrium between escalating desire and real need would destroy fellow-feeling among human beings. In this vital respect the ascetic anarchists of the nineteenth century were aligned with Rousseau against

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Marx, and in their recent revival they use Rousseauan rhetoric, often without knowing it. As one wryly contemplates today's explosive and fragmented society, pullulating with new needs and inauthentic desires, one understands the force of Rousseau's argument.

In the years following Rousseau's death, a younger generation took his ideal world seriously as a practical prospect, and though they embarked upon the course of the Revolution with a wide variety of political models, Rousseau was exalted as the prophet by all of them, the more so because he was not too circumstantial in proposing plans and methods of action. The Jacobin utopia incorporated in the works of Saint-Just, the futurist visions of Mercier and Condorcet, the communist utopia of Babeuf's conspiracy, and the erotic utopias of Restif de la Bretonne and the Marquis de Sade without exception acknowledge Jean-Jacques as their ancestor. He emerged triumphant in the revolutionary era because the novel sensibility he had generated could be bound up with widely varied political movements and moral doctrines that rationalist analysis might find conflicting. Rousseau idealized a new state of emotion in which local, fanatical, religious, and personal feudal loyalties would be replaced by the allegiance of one contented national family of Frenchmen who wanted few material things, loved one another, and miraculously thought and felt alike. They would no longer suffer from the discord of contradictory wills, but would achieve harmony in one general will.

Since the French Revolution there has been a multiplication of little utopian communities to which men and women flocked, for a few years at least, to create a *moi commun*. Nationalists of all colors, Marxist-Leninists, Maoists, even anarchists, have promised *moi communs* of various sizes, mostly on a larger scale. Even the prospect of one universal *moi commun* has been extended. In these movements, as in Rousseau, the *moi commun* was not merely a state or a polity; it was a pervasive emotion. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, those who joined together to bring about the new communal *moi*, either of a patriotic nationalist or communist internationalist character, experienced in the course of their struggles the creation of the communal will; at times it was akin to the "oceanic feeling" that has been used to define religious emotion. When men have known this feeling in the generosity or madness of youth they often cling covertly to the memory of its warmth after they have grown old and staid. Some are not emancipated from its tenacious hold even when their reason rebels against it.

Where did Rousseau find a simulacre of a *moi commun*? In Sparta, Republican Rome, Geneva, Corsica, the little village at the foot of the Alps that he invented in the *Nouvelle Héloïse*? There, at Clarens during the harvesting of the grapes, he conjures up something of the spirit of ideal community. For a moment the peasants and bourgeois and lords are united in labor and honest allowable pleasures—Jean-Jacques never had anything against good wine. Julie distributes functions and everyone naturally knows his place. (Any peasant who breaks the pastoral mood with excess or indecency is sacked.) Social classes simply do not matter in this community, when the sentiment of the communal *moi* has penetrated all bosoms. The communal *moi* of Clarens seems banal to us today, after de Gaulle's hortatory "French community," after all the talk about university communities, neighborhood communities, and the sermons of demo-

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cratic and communist leaders in the spirit of Jean-Jacques exhorting their people to self-sacrifice. Yet, though Rousseau's historical and novelistic examples no longer carry conviction, his fantasy has persisted in the passion of social revolutionary and nationalist movements.

In the past, at least according to the history books, there were religious societies that allowed for both a unique fulfillment of the *moi* in its particular relationship to God and a covenant of believers who created a brotherhood in God. In modern times synthetic religions or secular total systems of belief have aspired to reproduce similar conditions or have promised to make Rousseau's utopian fantasy a reality. They have usually ended up as caricatures. The devotees of a French cult of the 1830s, which had adepts throughout the world, proclaimed themselves "Children of Saint-Simon," their founding father, as there were brothers in Christ and sons of Abraham. To answer the criticism that their new religion would run the risk of a loss of the *moi* in its excessive stress upon the bonds of love and community, the Saint-Simonians had their names embroidered in large letters on their blue tunics. In variant forms Marx preached the "self-actualization of the individual" and in his rare utopian excursions raised the prospect of a communal *moi* in which creativity, participated in by all men, would lend wholeness to existence. But the communist countries that have enshrined his doctrines have manifested capability only for promulgating the dry formalism of a *moi* and a *moi commun* without their substance. When the heroic period of the seizure of power has passed, their new commonalities recall the last stages of societal degeneration in Jean-Jacques's *Second Discourse*, a world of men ranged in a hierarchy to kick and be kicked.

Western democracies in the tradition of Locke and Montesquieu have made attempts to demarcate with legal specificity and sometimes virtuosity the lines that protect the *moi* from any interference and to circumscribe the area in which society takes total possession. The intention at the core of this philosophy has been to leave the *moi* free to create its own content or to leave it as empty of coherent meaning as a creature can be and yet survive. The liberal constitutional state has in theory been divested of emotionality, and rational law and written tradition have pretended to be absolute, though always subject to simple rules of utility such as the self-preservation of the political body. This arrangement has provided a viable society that satisfies many elementary needs, opens wide the gates of curiosity, and allows for the expression of numberless desires. On balance, this appears to be for many of us the good, or at least the less bad, society. But its very neutrality ignores the powerful primitive yearning for a *moi commun* and reduces its binding emotions to weak links, while the individual *moi* as an integrated whole, an Emile perfect in his entirety, is a haphazard of fortune.

We may now be in the corrupt stage of the synthetic *moi commun*, the ad hoc *moi commun*, the *moi commun* created for emergency use only. Throughout the year we live in the jungle of competitive values, expend our emotive strength in acquiring objects or achieving goals that we do not need or really want, but that dazzle us in the marketplace. The educational system opens the prospect of satisfying infinite desire, trains our faculties toward that end, encourages us to create novelties or at least to give the appearance of innovating by finding new names for old things. Psychological gospels exhort us to discover our identity,

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impervious to capricious fortune and the demands of the world around us. We are torn by contrarieties and estranged from, even inimical to, our fellows. Yet one fine day we are summoned to peel the skin of our *amour-propre* and march off in defense of the *moi commun*.

If one examines Rousseau's conceptions of the *moi* and the *moi commun*, not as component elements of a political theory that has to show a modicum of logical consistency, but as coexistent desires, the richness of his utopian vision and its power may be highlighted. The pathos of the human condition lies in wanting identity and community too, and both in full measure. The yearning for a *moi* realized in all its potentiality and for a *moi commun* (despite our experience of its cruelties and distortions) is as poignant as ever. Rousseau could mediate between the two *moi*'s with a "conscience" which he turned into the religion of the Vicar of Savoy, and it serves romantic religiosity well enough. But materialists, despairing and isolated by inner feelings of vacuity, cannot live on this sentimental gospel. Upon rereading, Jean-Jacques's rhetorical rationalistic conciliation of the contradictions between the *moi* and the *moi commun* offers no great satisfaction. But though he spoke to another world, his diagnosis of the *mal moral* still bears credence, in part because it is not enchained with bonds of a parochial historical analysis. He carries conviction to us when he lays bare the inauthenticity of the conflicted *moi* that triumphantly announces its self-actualization and the fraudulence of the synthetic *moi commun* that is preached from political pulpits. To the self-tortured vagabond Jean-Jacques, who so deeply craved to be both his unique self in all its fullness and a citizen of the *moi commun* of a Heavenly Geneva, we owe a prophetic, sibylline, and maybe even true, discourse on the state of man. Not man as he is, but man as he might hope to be in his dreams. Such fantasies, like the other gifts with which he has been endowed, lead to heaven, hell, or purgatory.

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[4]Rousseau, *Émile*, vol. 4, p. 351 note. The *Émile* and the other works of Rousseau cited in these references are in the *Oeuvres complètes de Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, ed. Bernard Gagnebin and Marcel Raymond, 4 vols. (Paris: Gallimard, 1959–1969, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade).

[5]Ibid., p. 277.

[6]Rousseau, *Discours sur l'origine et les fondemens de l'inégalité parmi les hommes*, vol. 3, p. 122.

[7]*Émile* (Favre manuscript), p. 157.

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JUDITH N. SHKLAR

Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Equality

"JE CONCOIS UN NOUVEAU GENRE DE SERVICE à rendre aux hommes: c'est de leur offrir l'image fidelle de l'un d'entre eux afin qu'ils apprennent à se connoitre."[1] Rousseau's mirror was meant to reflect both our private and public faces, and without disguise. What were we to see? The image of man as a self-made victim. Rousseau was preeminently the philosopher of human misery. His entire design was to show how mankind had built a social prison for itself. In the course of this enterprise Rousseau produced a veritable encyclopedia of egalitarian ideas, unique both in its scope and in the personal passion that informs it. For Rousseau chose to write from the vantage point of the wretched. He was not, however, blind to the intellectual difficulties of the very idea of equality, and it is the blending of emotion and intelligence that gives his pages their unique quality. He did not invent the secular idea of equality, but he was its most complete and eloquent defender.

Rousseau chose to speak for and as one of the poor, but he did not share the limitations of their condition. He knew the privileged well and could address them with extraordinarily, perhaps surprisingly, great effect. Certainly he still moves that public. One of the more notable aspects of contemporary egalitarianism is that it is usually promoted by the competent and relatively rich for the sake of the feeble and poor. To say that it is merely the ideological vehicle for the politically ambitious does not suffice to explain the prevalence, especially among the young, of the conviction that inequality must go. The style of argument may be dry and pedestrian often, but the real inspiration is not revealed by words alone. It is compassion, pity, guilt, and shame or an aesthetic disgust at the very thought of so much man-made misery that forces men and women to abandon class, caste, and self-interest "to cast in (their) lot with the victims," in William Morris' words.[2] Wave upon wave of social outrage has swept over successive generations of Anglo-Americans moved by evangelical protestantism, utilitarian benevolence, and simply an immense pity.[3] Pity itself is old as mankind, but as a political force it is new. Rousseau did not invent it, perhaps, but he was the first to explain, to diagnose, and finally to judge it. That is because he made no attempt to disguise the personal and emotional aspects of his whole argument. Equality was not a quasilegal fiction for him, and inequality not something that others suffered. When he announced to his shocked readers that all our vices had their origin in inequality, he meant to take a wholly new view of the moral world: the way it looks from the very bottom of society.[4]

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The enduring source of Rousseau's insight into the condition of inequality was personal experience. His fateful decision to make his private life into a public document was grounded in the belief that his existence was politically significant. He alone had lived in every class of society without belonging to a single one of them. He had dined with princes and supped with peasants on the same day. Although born a citizen of a republic, he was ending his days as a refugee, enjoying "la célébrité des malheurs."[5] He was "the watchmaker's son" against whom all the states of Europe had formed a league. It was therefore he alone who could and did speak of equality as only a universal victim could. In this also he felt alone, especially in France, where "only masters and valets were wanted and where equality was held in horror."[6]

Masters and valets were the two poles of Rousseau's society. He had been a footman in several households, and he could speak of this peculiarly degrading situation as an insider. It was here that he learned to hate violently the ruling classes whose cruelty, pettiness, prejudices, and vices revolted him to the end of his days.[7] It was here also, more significantly, that he acquired his numerous vices. All valets are rogues and cheats. It is inherent in their position, and Rousseau was no exception. Envy, lying, dissimulation, dishonesty, and disloyalty to one's fellow servants are normal for valets. That is the wage for being dependent on others. The master is, in turn, corrupted by power. He becomes cruel and brutal.[8] As a general rule, for there are always a few exceptions, "la canaille des valets" is the lowest form of humanity—except for their masters.[9] There was little difference between domestic service and slavery for Rousseau. The two were separated only by the extent of personal dependence. That was the real evil, and it was morally devastating. No bonds of duty or of mutual obligation can be formed where one is completely helpless, the other omnipotent to all intents and purposes.

Rousseau was far more radical than *Figaro*. Beaumarchais' hero has long been recognized as a revolutionary figure. The servant who is smarter than his master had always been a stock figure of the comic stage, but *Figaro* was the first to resent it. That a gifted, competent, and honest man should serve a decadent nobleman was, suddenly, an outrage. That the likeable countess should have a maid, however, was not at all objectionable. For it was not the very existence of domestic service that was wrong. *Figaro* was rebelling against a system that subordinated useful talent to mere birth. He personified a circulation of élites. Rousseau clearly implied more, but he also had had a *Figaro*-like experience. Once, while serving at table he was able to demonstrate to an assembled aristocratic family that he was far better educated than the son of the house. He never forgot the sweet delight of that moment when things were for once "put in their natural order."[10] The unnatural order was, however, what prevailed, and Rousseau's response to it went beyond *Figaro*'s. It reached that revolutionary point that Tocqueville located halfway between an aristocratic and a democratic régime.[11] In the ancien régime the world "downstairs" mirrors that of "upstairs," and the servant identifies himself with the master so completely that he may well lose any sense of selfhood. Such was the faithful domestic retainer. In a democracy the servant is an employee who receives wages for services in an impersonal quid pro quo exchange in which the opinion of mutual equality prevails. In the period of transition, however, the master is "malevolent and

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soft," while the servant is "malevolent and intractable." Tocqueville had his reservations about the arrangement that created trusted retainers, and he knew that the democratic equality between servants and masters was only a sort of "fancied" opinion, not an actuality. He thought, as did Rousseau, that contracting for services was an improvement over a wholly servile state. The ex-slave in the North was very much like the base laquays, at the bottom of the old domestic order. They were "obstinate and cringing." The intermediary condition of revolution he deemed the worst. It had been Rousseau's own state, and he did not deny that it had brought him to the lowest moral point, as well as to a state of intolerable resentment.

The slave is only one degree below the valet. In slave households neither master nor slave belongs to a family, but only to a class.[12] The demoralization is the same for all domestic servants, but slavery is, in addition, totally unjust, or to be exact—antijust. It is a situation which cannot be mitigated, because the master cannot be a master without a slave, while the slave has no self at all.[13] The two are locked into a situation of total mutual dependence. That is why slavery is a paradigm for all the lesser states of personal dependence: it reveals so starkly what is wrong with all of them. The social contract is the only cure for them, because it alone depersonalizes, and so moralizes obedience.[14] The necessity for such a step becomes clear when one considers slavery. To begin with, it is wrong, because no man can have the right to sell his life. Only property can be bought, and property is a social creation, while one's life is a gift of nature. As suicide is wrong, so is selling oneself, since in both cases one is trading away something that is not wholly one's own. Certainly the life of children cannot be alienated by their parents. The Aristotelian argument that some people are naturally born slaves mistook the effect for the cause. It is enslavement that makes imbeciles, not the other way around. The most important reason we cannot sell ourselves is, however, moral. No one may simply give up his moral responsibilities, but the slave does just that. Without the power to make choices, he loses his moral personality.[15] His existence is antijust, an offense against the moral order. For enslavement is an assertion of pure force, which can give rise to no ties of duty or obligation, and the slave may rebel, if he can, in a simple act of counterassertion. Slavery is that ultimate point of personal dependence where right and wrong cease to apply.

Unjust, false, and degrading as slavery is, Rousseau did not forget that the finest of the classical republics depended on slave labor so that its citizens might have the leisure for self-government. That did not prove that slavery could be right, but merely that all civil institutions are subject to imperfections.[16] For slavery, like all the lesser kinds of social dependence, is systematic, not incidental. All the various degrees of inequality create the given social pattern to which individuals adapt. People had sympathized with Rousseau when he was sacked, but it was part of his position to be subject to that injustice, and so no one did anything. The poor are sacrificed to the rich by the maxims of all actual societies and by all legal systems, since these exist to stabilize inequalities of wealth.[17] For in the end, all inequalities can be reduced to rich and poor.[18] Even slavery is possible only because of that difference. That is why there is only one way to root out slavery: no one may be so rich as to buy another and no one so poor as to be tempted to sell himself. That is the basic minimum of equality

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required for personal freedom.[19] It is not enough to achieve justice. For that, another kind of equality is needed. "Moral and lawful equality" must replace the inequalities, both physical and intellectual, "that nature may have imposed upon mankind."[20]

What did Rousseau mean by natural inequality and "moral and legal equality?" Obviously he did not believe that men were "created equal" or alike. Human beings differ from one another at birth and throughout life.[21] However, in their natural presocial condition, when they are isolated and perfectly free, men's talents do not manifest themselves, nor do they matter. Only when men congregate and their intelligence develops do differences in natural endowment become significant. Then competition replaces egoism, and newly acquired skills and needs bring on the division of labor, mutual dependence, and accumulation of possessions. Inequality now is an established given among associated men, and the institutions of property, law, and government follow.[22] The cement that holds all this together is not egoism, which is a perfectly healthy instinct, but vanity, the desire to shine in the eyes of others and to climb up the social ladder. Otherwise those who benefit least from this system would not accept it so readily.[23] Men are not just oppressed but also deluded. They are, moreover, deeply divided within and among themselves, because the impulses of nature survive in the social state.[24] The exercise of power is an assertion of natural inequality, but might cannot make right. Physical prowess cannot make obligation, only submission. As soon as the oppressed can fight back, they will do so. Conquest, like slavery, is a harsh fact of life, and so is rebellion.[25] To become socialized we need to do more than just cease to be "stupid and limited animals"—we need a moral life.[26]

Even the worst societies have some standards of right and wrong, which create some notion of duty. The trouble is that the rules have no other purpose than to freeze people into positions of such inequality that only bonds of fear, not obligation, can develop. How can one have social rules that really serve the interests of all men? How can men be made to obey without anyone commanding, given "men as they are"?[27] If everyone openly agrees to a single set of rules to be equally and impersonally applied to all, then the citizens are all perfectly free, for they obey only themselves. To achieve that impersonality of legal rulership, the "total alienation of each associate of himself and his rights to the community" is the first step.[28] Nature must be really abandoned, so that each one can put himself in an identical relation to the whole. That way no one has an interest in making the rules onorous. Everyone receives the same rights and all oblige themselves to obey and to receive the protection of the laws under the same conditions.[29] It is a wholly artificial equality. The criminal is not the equal of the good citizen, but both are measured by the same yardstick. Just as money is a neutral standard which allows us to compare widely different commodities for purposes of fair exchange, so the law allows us to make fair judgments of civil worth.[30] Absolute equality is unthinkable in any society. All have standards, which some men meet and others do not. The question is how to have just rules of distribution according to which we judge some to be good and others bad. Rousseau thought this so obvious that he put it in a footnote.[31] The argument is, however, still offered with considerable flourish by the defenders of inequality. That is because it is incompatible with such rejections of all dis-

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tributive justice as the communist formula, "from each according to his abilities, to each according to his need." That may, in fact, provide the basis for new kinds of rules, but not, as Marx knew, for "men as they are" here and now.[32] The issue is not really equality here, and Rousseau's point is elementary. Since no society can exist without rules, the great question is which are the least onerous.

How much equality is needed for the rule of law? The people know well enough that equality before the law is in their interest, that when exceptions are made it will not be for the benefit of the many.[33] Nevertheless "the force of things" is always against equality, even though it is so obviously best for most men all of the time. Equality is not self-perpetuating, and the problem is therefore not how much equality, but how to maintain the degree of equality necessary to prevent injustice.[34] The point to be avoided is when the rich can bend the law in their own favor. There is no easy way to that end, for although the general will, the will of society considered as a single whole, always tends to equality, each one of us has a particular will which yearns for privilege. This unsocialized self would not in itself be dangerous if it were not organized. The perpetual threat to equality comes from factions, combinations, special associations, all of which become dominating castes.[35] There is a familiar populist sense of conspiracy here, all the more so since Rousseau was personally obsessed by it. Who was to rescue mankind from these multiple threats? The state as a paternal savior was the only possible hope. That introduces a new idea of freedom. Partial associations are bound to create personal dependencies, and these are so much power withdrawn from the "body of state."[36] Freedom is defined, here, as the unimpaired strength of the state, not as personal choice. Dependence on private persons is a loss of freedom now, *because* it diminishes the state, not because it enchains the subordinate. Freedom is in reliance on the state's laws which one has made. For one then is *not* doing anything one does *not* want to do, which is Rousseau's definition of freedom in society. It is exceptionally negative. Obeying one's socialized public ego is *not* being forced by anyone else.[37] To that end equality is absolutely necessary, because one cannot identify with the law fully in its absence.

Equality, however, is not enough to ensure that the force of the state be recognized as a liberation. Heavy doses of civic education and manipulation by a great legislator and by censors are needed to keep the civic self alive. Rousseau's medicine may well have been worse than the disease. It is, however, absurd to overlook the psychological truth to which he points. He and many other people who have no self-confidence experience paternal rule as liberating. Protection is not freedom, but it certainly may feel just like it. Nevertheless, anyone who thinks that pluralism and diversity of views and manners are the very core of freedom will look upon Rousseau's definition of freedom as a simple abuse of the word.[38] The liberty of those who can cope on their own is one that rejoices in conflict and competition. To those who see themselves as unalterably weak and subject to oppression by an endless army of predators, this prospect is a nightmare. Rousseau chose to see society from their perspective, and his view of freedom follows from it.

In fact Rousseau was not oblivious to some of the difficulties that a policy of preventing inequality might create. To suppress potentially dangerous particu-

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lar associations requires a strong government. That immediately creates a problem, for the government is also a "particular association." It has, like all the others, whether they be military or religious, loyalties and interests that are at odds with those of the general public.[39] The means of domination are always readily at hand. The purposes and the actual tasks of governments are therefore usually incompatible. Governments are necessary to enforce the law, not to make it; that is to be done by the sovereign people.[40] As executive agents, governments should in principle have no arms of their own. However, their work is such as to make them the masters, rather than the servants of the people. They must prevent the rise of wealth and poverty which would quickly make a mockery of the social contract. For once there are rich and poor, every law serves the former. To achieve equality the government must command ample forces, and with that the awful equality of despotism may eventually come.[41]

For all their defects, Rousseau could imagine governments that could successfully impose and maintain equality. The conditions that he set might seem utopian, but in fact they amount to the very opposite: an exact estimate of the full cost of equality. There would be very little divison of labor in a subsistence economy with no foreign trade as part of a society that would have no arts or sciences or any civilization to speak of. The price of equality is the elimination, preferably through taxation, of any surplus. Rousseau knew perfectly well that no modern European, certainly not any of his Genevan fellow citizens, was interested enough in equality to accept such harsh terms. Corsica might try to create equality at such a cost, but no one else would. Rousseau was exceptionally honest here. He had no intention of claiming that equality could be had cheaply, or that civilized people could really afford it. If Corsica was to attempt a policy of equality, all opportunities for the accumulation of riches must simply be eliminated. In a permanently underdeveloped, agrarian society, that is readily avoided. Under this "rustic system" each one produces enough for himself and his family and is discouraged by taxation from doing more. Under primitive noncommercial conditions there will be no atrophy of incentives to work, for self-sufficiency requires a lot of hard labor. The state will be rich, the people poor, and there will be a minimum of inequality.[42] Contemporary political theorists who see Rousseau as the prophet of Third World democracy have not taken full account of these views. The hope that Third World countries might retain enough traditional social cohesion to avoid the class divisions of the former colonial powers may, or may not, be reasonable. Since these countries are determined to become developed technological societies, however, they are not taking Rousseau seriously. He at least took it for granted that the equality of rustic systems such as Corsica's could not survive even commerce and money, not to mention industrial economies. Whatever the rhetoric, the élites of these countries and their Western champions owe little to Rousseau's vision of agrarian equality.[43]

Rousseau's preference for the rustic system was inspired not only by his egalitarianism, but also by a deep moral distaste for luxury. To be sure, luxury was, in the first instance, the effect of inequality, but once superfluity existed, it was a powerful stimulus to ever greater inequalities. That was not all. Luxury was directly corrupting. It made men soft and self-indulgent. It destroyed the martial spirit and eroded civic virtue.[44] These views had long been a standard

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feature of that civic humanism which was central to early modern radicalism.[45] Robespierre was to be both its epitome and nemesis, whereas Rousseau was perhaps its last genuine prophet. If any remnants of this Spartan moralism survive, it is among those who revile the consumer society as demoralized and politically debilitating. Rousseau was, however, far more severe than these contemporary critics. Luxury included the arts and sciences, and not only soporific *Kitsch*. It was high culture that provided the garlands to hide the chains which imprisoned the people. It entertained the ruling classes and gave artists a means to gain public reputations. It kept citizens from their social duties, and ruined their private morals. Art as a spectator sport was isolating and ruptured the ties of social life. Finally it provided audiences with a pseudomorality. After weeping at the spectacle of suffering, they felt that they had actually done good deeds. The best that could be said for the theater was that in a corrupt city, like Paris, it kept the dissolute off the streets, where they would commit crimes. Rousseau thought that art alienates people, because it provides an imaginary world to which one can escape, away from family, work, and social duty.[46] Nothing could be more opposed to this than Marcuse's complaint that the rationalized domestication of art has robbed us of its revolutionary antibourgeois power. For him it is precisely high art that enables one to recognize the shoddiness of all actuality.[47] To Rousseau art looked like a mere escape from actuality, which is our one and only world. But then Rousseau did not look forward to revolution from above. In fact he did not look forward to anything. Change is always a disaster: for societies, because the normal course of history is from bad to worse, for the individual, because social mobility is psychologically destructive.[48]

Science, Rousseau thought less harmful than high art. For most men it is an unsuitable waste of time, but the great scientist is not corrupted as artists and writers are. Scientists are not mere peacocks and flatterers of the great. Moreover, Rousseau could imagine popular art that was not destructive. The Swiss peasant locked in his cabin might sing, fiddle, and do a little science without harm. On the contrary, it kept him and his family happy and united.[49] Finally there were the public festivals. The Greek drama was a national spectacle uniting citizens in common remembrance of their past. Modern country fairs again provide a lot of communal pleasure and renew ties of friendship among hard-working people.[50] This is certainly not a full-blown ideology of popular culture, but it is its beginning and it stems from Rousseau's own experience as both a successful artist and a failed citizen.[51]

In the end luxury was part of the system of rich and poor. Intellectual luxury was an excess of self-development, as material luxury was the production of superfluities. Neither would arise if men did not wish to be superior to their fellows. The best answer to it was civic education and sumptuary laws, imposed especially on the well-to-do.[52] That returns us to the difficulty of governmental usurpation. It is an unavoidable evil, but it can be postponed. Both the form of the government and the vigilance of the sovereign people can do much to put off the fate that overcame even the best of republics.[53] The best form of government varies from place to place, in keeping with the considerations that Montesquieu had discussed. In principle, however the most just government is the one that departs least from the general will which seeks equality. That would be direct democracy, but it is possible, if at all, only in a primitive Swiss Canton—

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not generally. Men fit to govern themselves would need no government at all.[54] The best alternative is an elective aristocracy chosen for brief periods of office by the whole people. In general that would mean that the wealthier members of society will be elected, but from time to time a poor man should be chosen to prove that merit is not ignored.[55] This system is not to be confused with representative government in which deputies make laws, which is a destruction of popular sovereignty, since political justice and freedom depend on popular legislation.[56] Representation may be one way to govern large polities, but these cannot enjoy much freedom. The citizen is an insignificant cipher, and the rigor of the law must be severe to reach a great, dispersed population.[57]

Given the difficulties of democratic government, there is always the potential for tyranny, and only a watchful citizenry can prevent its emergence. This is why active political participation is necessary.[58] The people do not assemble to make new laws. That is to be avoided, as is all change. The popular assemblies exist to preserve the republic, not to alter or adapt its laws.[59] Their chief purpose is to express their confidence in or dissatisfaction with the magistrates and to reconfirm the original laws. Sporadic and limited as these gatherings are, they clearly are designed to protect the interests of the people at large, and everyone is expected to attend and to take an active part in the proceedings.[60] They are clearly very democratic, but they do not aim at the sort of politics today called participatory democracy. First of all, Rousseau's assemblies do not govern and do not frame policies; that is left entirely in the hands of the elected magistrates. The function of participation is also different. It does indeed aim at forming a new and better individual citizen, but not by encouraging the "realization of his creative capacities."[61] The citizen is to be relentlessly socialized, to remain patriotic, and to achieve personal and social integration by identifying directly and constantly with the polity. He is to be made and kept a patriot all the time. When the citizens no longer rush to the assembly, all is lost.[62] Civic commitment also expresses itself in unanimity. When there is a small minority vote, it does not matter; a few individuals have erred, and a large majority is likely to be close to the general public will. The real disaster is when a majority has lost its general will. Then the republic is dead, killed by the particular wills to inequality—for men may agree to that also.[63] Mutuality of obligation tends to evaporate, but assemblies can halt that.

Rousseau's democracy was not designed to promote a long conversation in a "public space," bringing compromise, social change, self-fulfillment, and power to one and all. It was far from being eccentric. New England town meetings in the eighteenth century were also meant to achieve consensus. Differences were generally called unhappy, and the primacy of peace rendered discord, argument, and parties unacceptable. The meetings were not presented with a choice of competing interests or opinions. They met to reassert the unity of townsmen. In the absence of coercive authority the town meeting shaped obedience by creating harmony, which was achieved by careful compromises and pressures well before the meeting took place. Neither the defense of private interests nor the projection of personal ideas was welcome.[64] Given the small size and exclusiveness of the towns, these meetings were not, however, extensively "managed." The advocates of participatory democracy today tend to accept far more specialization of functions, and to provide a great deal of direction to those who

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are to be improved by participating. Its educative ideal is, moreover, highly personalized and dynamic. There is none of that in Rousseau. His civic-soldierly peasants may not be plain New Englanders, but the psychic benefit of participation for them is also social integrity and mutual peace. The elimination of emotional and social conflict is the great objective. Why this requires so much civic heroism is not altogether clear, but at least Rousseau did not expect the poor to become a heroic proletariat. Certainly creativity, individual self-fulfillment, and personal completion were not what he had in mind. In the end the simple domestic contentment of the peasant-citizen was his ultimate test of good government, and he in fact expected men to remain "as they are."[65] That did not mean pluralism or freedom, but censors, tutorial legislators, civic religion, and mutual watchfulness. To Rousseau it seemed a price worth paying for political cohesion and emotional peace.

The emphasis on political unanimity and on common mores and beliefs and on an essentially plebiscitary system, reveals the distance between Rousseau and the New England towns of his time. It is a difference rooted in Rousseau's low opinion of the social capacities and general intelligence of most people. Community is therefore not an independent ideal for him, the end which equality is meant to serve. Indeed if by community we mean not only shared attitudes, but also constant interaction between individuals, Rousseau was against it. The benefits of solitude were, in his eyes, too great for that. One of the advantages of the Swiss mountain cantons was that its people were kept indoors and apart by the weather for almost half the year.[66] To avoid parties or any divisive ongoings each member of the assembly must, before voting, isolate himself to seek only his own opinion.[67] Each citizen is inextricably bound to the state, but each one is alone, a discrete unit in relation to the whole. There are indeed to be plenty of festivities in a good society, but the main purpose of these, beyond fun and games, is to arrange marriages.[68] The community is one that has only private and no public functions. It enhances ties of affection in hours of leisure, but work and politics are individualized; for relations of dependence and exploitation would otherwise arise. There is, moreover, one community in which there is no equality at all—the family. Women are to be inferior to their husbands. Equality is between households, not between spouses.[69] That had something to do with Rousseau's fear that women tended to dominate men. Indeed the primacy of isolation expresses a profound sense of weakness and inadequacy. In solitude one is at last safe from the domination of others. This is not the solitude of Prometheus, but the self-protective flight of the incurably weak who are afraid of being bossed.[70] Mutuality is achieved by avoiding face-to-face relationships, and the impersonality of legal relations becomes a substitute for politics.[71] That may not appeal to those who feel a great deal of confidence in their ability to hold their own in a free political arena, but it may have an obvious advantage for those whose chief hope is to escape subjugation, especially in the form of personal dependence.

Not only are most individuals too weak to protect themselves against the strong among them. They are not even able to see and pursue their own best interest. The general will, the public will of the people does tend to equality, but alas, "the force of things is always against it."[72] That is so because "the people are stupid."[73] The people are simply a collection of potential victims.

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They are nevertheless better, healthier, and more decent than the rich and powerful. They are also all that matters. Let all the kings and philosophers disappear and everything would go on much as usual.[74] These are indeed the perennial attitudes of "populism," and Rousseau was surely its original voice. American agrarian populism shared his truculence, the demand that the simple decencies should receive the respect they deserve, and a certain moralistic distaste for intellectuals. But the hope that, given the opportunity, each man could rise by his own efforts was there also. It was wholly absent in Rousseau and in most European populism.[75] Indeed Rousseau was far better able to accept failure and rejection than his overwhelming success. "Let no one say that my life is of no interest because I am a man of the people," he wrote about his *Confessions*.[76] He knew of course that he had made his life sensationally fascinating, but he preferred to present himself as not only the spokesman, but also as one of the people. He had, after all, begun as "the son of a watchmaker."

The picture of the people as an undifferentiated mass which must be protected against the depredations of financiers and tax-gatherers is certainly inspired by the most intense feelings of class hatred, but it is not the militancy of the Marxian proletariat. Rousseau's people are to look backward from technology and development to a harmony that history has always missed. To be sure Rousseau knew as much about social alienation as the author of *On the Jewish Question*. Marx was, however, right not to acknowledge any affinity for Rousseau, who was ahistorical and only wanted to escape from, not to transform, the new world that was coming into being. Rousseau's egalitarianism did, however, serve that all-purpose antiestablishment fervor which has colored every subsequent ideology and has survived them all. Populism is a sort of trade-unionism of the victimized, a response to the people seen in terms of its sufferings, but there are also far less structured reactions. Pity is likely to be the most immediate feeling, and Rousseau certainly meant to arouse it in his readers.

It has lately been argued that Rousseau invented political pity, and that he supplied Robespierre and Saint-Just with the rhetoric of "compassionate zeal" on behalf of the wretched.[77] That may be something of an exaggeration, but there is no doubt that Rousseau did much to advertise pity as a means of creating bonds of solidarity. He did, however, have much more to say on the subject.[78] Pity is one of man's natural feelings. Natural man identifies immediately with the suffering being, whether it be another man or an animal. He knows intuitively that he too is a potential sufferer, and he feels briefly the pain he sees. That is to be expected, because suffering is the universal experience. To be human is to suffer. In simple people, whose passions are not overwhelming, and whose intelligence is limited, this capacity for compassion survives in society. Among the rich and clever it atrophies. When there is a street fight the market women will separate the brawlers; the scholar just shuts the noise out. Nevertheless, pity remains a sweet emotion in society; but it is not quite the same sentiment that it was in nature. Now that we compare ourselves to each other all the time, there is always an element of self-satisfaction in pity; we are glad that it is not we who are suffering when we pity another person. That does not render pity socially worthless. On the contrary, even though it be flawed, it is still the only feeling likely to bind us to one another. It serves among the people

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to bring them together, and it would render the wealthy less odious if they would not bear the sufferings of others quite so patiently. It is, in fact, common among the rich to claim that the poor are too stupid to suffer, and so to absolve themselves from the pangs of pity. That is the mature, adult response. In our society adolescence is the only age when pity is felt intensely; later, callousness is rationalized. Education might attenuate that, but in the long run there must be less inequality, so that only the people remain, if pity is to accomplish its binding task.[79]

The place of pity in society is socially ambiguous. It is a tie between the dissociated, but it is no substitute for duty. Without duty there can be no polity, but there would be no impulse to treat people fairly without mutual identification, which requires compassion. Indeed, Rousseau's own enduring hatred for injustice had its germ in a compassionate encounter with a hospitable peasant who lived in fear of tax agents.[80] It is, however, very dangerous to let pity degenerate into weakness. Compassion must be generalized and depersonalized until it is transformed into justice. Pity cures us of hatred, cruelty, and envy, but it is no replacement for justice, which depends not on feeling, but on an unremitting adherence to rules. Moreover, the kindness that pity expresses creates ties of dependence. The feeble cling to their benefactors without gaining strength, while the latter soon feel intolerably burdened by the objects of their generosity. Rousseau for once spoke as a patron and admitted that he had been too weak and too inconstant to endure the obligations that he had incurred by his casual acts of benevolence. He simply ran away from his charges.[81] Pity is too uncertain and fluctuating to guide us in society. We need duty and justice that depend on law, not sentiment, which reduces the weak to suffering clients. In nature we do not need attitudes that support enduring relationships. Pity is fleeting there also, lasting only as long as the sight of suffering is present. Then it goes away. It creates no bonds and can be evoked as readily by an animal in pain as by another human being. It is no more enduring among socialized men. Rousseau had been patronized often enough to know the difference between friendship and justice among equals and the benevolence that the strong may lavish occasionally on those whom they wish to help.

Justice, unlike pity, makes the weak independent. By belonging to a polity, they gain the strength of citizens, which protects them against the strong in body and mind. Compassion binds the weak together, as vanity tears them apart, but these ties of natural emotion are quite inadequate in society. They cannot protect legitimate interests, nor sustain the public good. Without pity we would not be joined, but once we have come together, only justice can make society tolerable. That is why the poor must be protected even against pity, lest they fall prey to the vices of helplessness. Beggars are the support of tyranny. If the poor, who are never disguised, are far from amiable, the rich, when they are seen as they really are, are horrible. Rousseau had little use for the consumers of pity, but he hated far more those who refused to respond to suffering. Without equality there could be no healthy compassion, just as without pity there could be no justice.

Political pity has been with us for more than two hundred years, fired by religious revivals, sentimental literature, guilt, and much else. That it is no substitute for justice will come as no surprise to those who know the history of

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America's exslaves. Rousseau is not to blame for the inadequacy of pity, which he both stimulated and dissected. On the contrary, by identifying with the dispossessed, he could shudder at the harshness of the rich and yet know perfectly well that this was not the great question of politics. The real issues clustered around the historically inevitable experience of inequality. What makes his account of the majestic progress of inequality and oppression so complete and compelling is his refusal to abandon the source of his energy, his unquenchable sense of personal injury. He was with matchless success able to reveal the experiences of the endemically unsuccessful. Other philosophers write about those less fortunate than themselves in measured sentences, and they often do persuade us of their case. But they do not shake us, as Rousseau does, with his epic prose. He alone is the Homer of the losers.

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[46]*Lettre à d'Alembert*, pp. 20–21, 33–34, 77–79; *Préface à "Narcisse,"* vol. 2, pp. 963–972.

[47]Herbert Marcuse, *One Dimensional Man* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1964), pp. 56–74.

[48]*Lettre à d'Alembert*, pp. 99–100; *Corsica*, p. 925; *Émile*, p. 251; *Économie politique*, p. 264.

[49]*Lettre à d'Alembert*, pp. 80–82; *Discours sur les arts*, p. 29; *Observations*, p. 52–53; *Dernière réponse*, vol. 1, pp. 72–73.

[50]*Lettre à d'Alembert*, pp. 44, 103–105, 168–176.

[51]*Préface à "Narcisse,"* pp. 952–963, 972–974.

[52]*Corsica*, p. 936; *Économie politique*, pp. 259–261, 276–277.

[53]*Contrat social*, book 3, chaps. 10, 11, 18.

[54]Ibid., book 3, chaps. 2, 4, 8; book 4, chaps. 1, 3.

[55]Ibid., book 3, chaps. 5, 6.

[56]Ibid., book 3, chap. 15.

[57]Ibid., book 2, chap. 4; book 3, chap. 6.

[58]Ibid., book 3, chaps. 11–13; book 4, chap. 5.

[59]Ibid., book 3, chap. 3; book 4, chap. 1.

[60]Ibid., book 3, chap. 18; book 4.

[61]Macpherson, *Democratic Theory*, p. 184, is one example among many.

[62]*Contrat social*, book 3, chap. 15.

[63]Ibid., book 4, chaps. 11, 12.

[64]Michael Zuckerman, *Peaceable Kingdoms* (New York: Vintage/Random House, 1970), pp. 65–72, 93–102, 154–156 et passim.

[65]*Contrat social*, book 3, chap. 9.

[66]*Lettre à d'Alembert*, pp. 80–82; *Corsica*, p. 914.

[67]*Contrat social*, book 2, chaps. 3, 12.

[68]*Lettre à d'Alembert*, pp. 168–171, 179–184.

[69]E.g. *Économie politique*, p. 242.

[70]*Les Rêveries*, vol. 1, pp. 1040–1049, 1159.

[71]See John Charvet, *The Social Problem in the Philosophy of Rousseau* (Cambridge, England: The University Press, 1974) for an excellent critique of this aspect of Rousseau's thought.

[72]*Contrat social*, book 2, chap. 11.

[73]*Lettre à Christophe de Beaumont*, pp. 950–951; *Contrat social*, book 2, chap. 6.

[74]*Émile*, pp. 509–510.

[75]Richard Hofstadter "North America," and Peter Wiles, "Symptom not a Doctrine," in *Populism*, ed. Ghita Ionescu and Ernest Gellner (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1969), pp. 1–27, 166–179.

[76]*Ébauches des Confessions*, p. 1150.

[77]Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution* (New York: Viking, 1965), pp. 68–76, 83–87.

[78]I am much indebted to Clifford L. Orwin's unpublished Harvard Ph.D. dissertation, "Humanity and Justice: The Problem of Compassion in the Thought of Rousseau" (1976).

[79]*Discours sur l'inégalité*, pp. 154–156, 170, 176–177; *Émile*, pp. 503–548.

[80]*Les Confessions*, pp. 163–164.

[81]*Les Rêveries*, pp. 1051–1055.

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Rousseau and Social Marginality

As a way of beginning, let me summarize the argument of this essay. With the exception of a few brief periods, Jean-Jacques Rousseau was a *marginal* throughout his life. His social experience was in large part that of an outsider, a person on the fringes of society; more precisely, he experienced a variety of forms and aspects of social marginality. Rousseau lived this experience with particular intensity and internalized his situation with an exceptional and inimitable sensitivity uniquely his own.

Not only did Rousseau undergo the social experience of marginality; throughout his writings he carried on a discourse on the outsider's condition. This discourse was not based solely on personal experience, however. As is so often the case with Rousseau's work, the personal experience is integrated into a wider consideration of man, his world, and his history. The marginal of whom Jean-Jacques writes has firm roots not only in an individual and psychological reality, but also in a collective and historical reality. Let us examine the sociological and cultural implications of Rousseau's portrayal of marginality.

An Outsider in the Age of Enlightenment

We should begin this essay, then, with a definition. What does it mean to be a marginal man, and in particular, to have been that during the Age of Enlightenment? Obviously the term does not date from the period, although, to be sure, the eighteenth century was familiar with this social phenomenon, which it fostered constantly. In the language of the period, however, it was expressed in other terms. The term *social marginality* is of very recent origin, as is another term, *anomie*, which serves well to describe the phenomenon, if not to explain its causes. The terms *anomie* and *marginality* seem to be particularly fashionable today. Like all linguistic fashions, this one tells much about the preoccupations of the age which gave it rise. For do we not live in an age when the problem of the marginal has taken on a particular importance? On the one hand, we are witnessing the emergence of new types of marginality and marginal people—one need only think of the hippie phenomenon; on the other hand, in our so-called permissive society, values and behaviors which were formerly suppressed and rejected today have moved from the "periphery" to the "center" of society. Very often the sensibility to new values emerges first in the subculture or the fringes of society and is then reproduced in the "center." Marginal values, atti-

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tudes, and behavior, combined with myths and ideologies, introduce themselves eventually into political life. This is perhaps the most striking phenomenon of our age, and it is extremely complex. The sociologists sometimes console us by explaining that there is no society without its marginals, and that, in the long run, every society ends up with the marginals it deserves—a poor consolation, though. True, the sociologist has contributed greatly to a better understanding of the phenomenon of marginality, in particular by shedding light on the mechanisms of rejection whereby a society produces its outsiders. The sociologist's knowledge is incomplete and provisory, however, and lags behind the realities. Furthermore, it does not suffice to resolve the troubling problems posed by today's social marginality. Modern society no more knows what to do with its outsiders than did previous societies; they, like we, could neither live with their marginals nor do without them.

Modern preoccupations with marginality are certainly not irrelevant to a reading of Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Is it not a commonplace that every rereading of a literary masterpiece necessarily implies a dialogue between a past and a particular present? To return, however, to our definition of marginality, it does not seem especially useful to apply to the social realities of the eighteenth century one of today's sweeping and summary definitions. To begin with, sociologists are far from agreeing on these definitions, which are never neutral. This hardly facilitates the task of the historian, a handyman who too often works with borrowed tools. Next, these definitions are necessarily too abstract for our purposes. Indeed, each society has its own specific ways of creating marginal members, and at the same time, its own particular forms of marginality. Moreover, the boundaries which define marginality as a social category are necessarily shifting, and their mobility is particularly striking when one studies individual cases. Therefore, instead of relying on an abstract and ahistorical definition, let us take Jean-Jacques' own words as our point of departure.

Announcing his intention to write his confessions, "containing the account of the events in his life and his innermost feelings in every situation in which he has been," Jean-Jacques defined the social standpoint from which he spoke:

> If experience and observation are considered worthwhile, I am, in this respect, in perhaps the most advantageous situation in which a mortal has ever found himself, because, *having no particular estate myself*, I have known all the estates; I have lived in every social condition, from the lowest to the highest, except for that of the throne. Great men know only the great, the small know only the small. The latter see the former only through their admiration of high rank, and they are themselves seen by the former with only an unjustified disdain. Their contact with each other being very limited, that which they share as human beings completely escapes them. But I, careful to lift their masks, have recognized it everywhere. I have weighed, I have compared their respective tastes, their pleasures, their prejudices, and their maxims. Moving freely, as a man without pretention or significance, I have observed them at my leisure. When they stopped disguising themselves, I was able to compare man to man and condition to condition. *Being nothing* and desiring nothing, I encumbered and bothered no one. Attached to nothing, I freely passed everywhere, sometimes dining with princes and supping with peasants.[1] [Emphasis added. B.B.]

From this famous passage, to which we will have frequent recourse, let us note three elements. First, a quasidefinition of the marginal man. In a society

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which defines itself in terms of estates and conditions, he is perforce marginal who lives "having no particular estate," and hence is "nothing." Second, Rousseau places the marginal between two opposing social poles: the great men and the small. His social experience falls between these two poles; he rubbed elbows with both the rich and the poor, the rulers and the ruled. Finally, let us note that Rousseau values the circumstance defined by the absence of social integration. Rousseau esteems it as a privileged position, the source of the discourse which bears on man in general, and which throws in question the social structures that enclose the individual in hierarchical estates.

Of the numerous types of marginality produced by eighteenth-century society, Jean-Jacques experienced only two. He experienced marginality, on the one hand, among the vagabond poor, and, on the other hand, among the debutant intellectuals. To analyze these two categories fully would require a lengthy digression; for our purposes some brief remarks will suffice.

The poor man, in the specific sense that the eighteenth century gave to the term, was the man who subsisted by his labor. "Work is the only patrimony of the people. They must either work or go begging."[2] These alternatives were every bit as rude as the boundary between those who worked and those who begged was mobile. With its economic crises, especially the crises of subsistence which gave the statistical curves describing the period their characteristic saw-toothed profile, eighteenth-century society condemned a vast segment of the population to cross this boundary. In their search for bread and work, the poor thronged the routes which led from country to town and the highways which linked the major cities. The social system rejected the *sans-aveux*, the vagrants, as outsiders and considered them "asocial" beings. The vagabonds represented a considerable number, though it is difficult to estimate how many there were who marked the social landscape of the period with their disquieting presence. In his itinerant life, the vagabond left few recoverable traces for the historian, which is to say, few written traces. His only chance to "enter history" came at the particularly critical moments of his life. What other form could his entrance into history take than a line in the registry of the poorhouse that took him in or in the official report of the constabulary who arrested him? We are scarcely aware of the existence of this subculture of wanderers, of *sans-aveux*, of vagabonds, and only recently has it found its historians.[3]

The other kind of outsider we have mentioned is the debutant intellectual out to make his fortune in the big city, especially in Paris. As a rule, he had "ascended" to Paris—for no one "descended" to Paris, even if he came from Auvergne or the Alpine regions—from a small town, or, more rarely, from the country. Having attended for a short time classes at the local *lycée*, he brought with him his first opus, by which he hoped to spread his name and win for himself a place in the brilliant "republic of letters." In the meanwhile, before he succeeded—if he ever did succeed—he had to live day by day, all too often selling his pen, snaring an assignment here, a dinner invitation there. He belonged to a subculture that peopled the garrets of Paris. According to Louis-Sebastien Mercier, who knew these places through personal experience, this was "the most curious part of the city." "There the painter quietly perfects his art; there the poet writes his first verses; there dwell the children of the arts, impoverished, laborious, diligent observers of Nature's marvels, giving useful

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inventions and lessons to the universe. There the masterpieces of the arts are conceived; there is written a mandamus for a bishop, a speech for a solicitor general, a book for a future minister, a project that shall alter the face of the state, a play that shall delight the nation." It was in one of these garrets that Mercier saw "the author of *Emile*, poor, proud, and satisfied," as he encountered in this "curious part of the city" several other men of letters. Indeed, Mercier added, "There are almost no famous men who did not get their start living in a garret." But among these "garret writers," as Voltaire, not without scorn, called them, how numerous were those who never became celebrities and who never changed their place of dwelling. Diderot, in his *Neveu de Rameau*, painted a portrait we recognize as one of those *petits intellectuels* who have never succeeded. The marginality in which he came to rest merged with his existence as a social parasite.[4]

It would be foolish to maintain that these two forms of social marginality exhaust the categories of Enlightenment marginals. It is also obvious that the two categories were completely separate and that one cannot explain the other. The way that society produced them, their respective dimensions, their conditions in life, and their social standing were very different.

Vagrancy was a mass phenomenon which spread throughout most of the land. It was a condition which permanently menaced the poor, and which was fostered by the most basic social structures of the ancien régime. The vagabonds clung to the lowest rung of the social ladder, hemmed in by the constabulary, chased away by the peasants, locked up in poorhouses and in asylums. They had almost no chance of social advancement, however miserable it might be. They were illiterate in vast numbers, and at most their writing turns up at the bottom of an interrogation report in the form of an "X" or a maladroit signature.

The marginal intelligentsia was numerically very small, although again its exact size is difficult to estimate, and it was concentrated in Paris. The marginality of the *petits intellectuels* was defined by their relation to the establishment, in particular to the intellectual elite who were integrated into the social system, those who occupied the rare seats in the academies or flourished on the patronage of a Maecenas. The rampant growth of the intellectual fringe derived in part from the growing appeal of a literary career as a means of social advancement, and, in part, from the scarcity of openings offered by the institutions of a society incapable of assimilating the intellectuals it produced. The *petit intellectuel* wielded a certain Knowledge upon which he based his ambitions to scale the social ladder and to benefit, as a result, from the goods redistributed by Power, if not actually to gain a small parcel of power himself.

The passage from one category of marginal to another was rare, then, and, as a rule, transitions occurred only in a downward direction. It could come to pass that a *petit intellectuel* could so degrade himself that he would be forced to wander alongside the vagrants or to seek refuge in an almshouse. But how could a true vagabond ascend to a Paris salon or even dream of it? He remained ignorant of its very existence, and even his imagination crashed against insurmountable social barriers.

Thus, sociologically speaking, Rousseau's career represents an exceptional, if not unique, case. The experience he underwent was all the richer for this. It

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largely informed his discourse on marginality. Yet Rousseau did not restrict himself to a simple narrative of personal experiences. Jean-Jacques regarded marginality as a multiform phenomenon, a social actuality, but also a relationship with the world and a model of existence, one which he constantly had to confront and with which he constantly struggled. To *submit* to marginality, to choose it, or to refuse it were for Rousseau aspects of the same condition, which he continually confronted throughout his life and work. Occasionally, one of these aspects seemed to sweep Rousseau away from the others, but he quickly averred that none was definitively overturned. For the convenience of argument only, we shall take up separately these themes which exist conjointly in Rousseau's work and which weave their way through his writing, informing and illuminating one another.

Imposed Marginality

It all began on the day, or rather the evening, of March 14, 1728, when Jean-Jacques found the gates of Geneva closed behind him and left his native city for good. This was a biographical turning point, marked by a radical change in his social condition. Obviously, it would be easy to explain that this leaving was but a psychological continuation of the childhood experience of this sixteen-year-old who had never known a real family, had failed to integrate himself into his surroundings, had thieved occasionally (for gain or out of protest?), and who had survived his early experiences with a remarkable hypersensitivity. Even so, sociologically speaking, the rupture was brutal. On that day, Jean-Jacques began what he himself, carefully choosing the expression, defined as "the life of a true vagrant," "the existence of a true vagabond."[5] The Jean-Jacques who wandered aimlessly in the countryside surrounding Geneva and who afterward took three days to walk from Confignon to Annecy (scarcely forty kilometers) corresponds perfectly to the composite portrait of a vagrant drawn by innumerable ordinances of the period. He was a veritable *sans-aveu*; he had no permanent domicile; he had neither money, nor skills, nor work. Worse, he had no religion and belonged to no creed, for he had already decided to abandon Protestantism and had not yet embraced the Catholic Church. Jean-Jacques endured this state of vagrancy for three years, treading the roads of Savoy, Italy, and France, staying at the Hospice with the Turin novitiates, sleeping on straw pallets or under the open skies, begging throughout the countryside with his Heron's fountain. The paths of his wanderings are easy to retrace in the *Confessions*. Naturally, imagery often outshines the actual experiences in a narrative which was written well after the fact. Furthermore, one finds in Rousseau's narrative the influence of a literary model, the picaresque novel. Still, the passages of the *Confessions* which recount the experiences of a vagabond are particularly rich in sociological evidence. We shall focus on two very revealing indicators of Jean-Jacques' marginal condition: his means of transportation and the people he met during his years of vagrancy.

Like hundreds of thousands of other vagabonds, Rousseau did not choose his mode of travel: it was forced upon him. He journeyed thousands of kilometers on foot, with all of his baggage, or more precisely, with almost no baggage. Would it be mere sociological whimsy to suggest that change in his mode of

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transportation represented a landmark in Rousseau's life? It is undeniable though that once Jean-Jacques began to rent a horse or to travel by coach or post-chaise he separated himself once and for all from vagrant marginality. True, his whole life he kept his *manie ambulante*, his passion for walking,[6] his taste for traveling on foot which he so praised in the *Emile*. At the height of his career in Paris, he formulated a plan to tour Italy on foot, and he tried, albeit unsuccessfully, to interest Grimm and Diderot in joining him. At the age of 52 he journeyed on foot from Môtiers to Morges, in Switzerland. However, we must not confuse the "solitary walker" with the vagabond, nor tourism with vagrancy. A baggage porter was supposed to accompany our illustrious travelers on the projected journey through Italy. On his way to Morges, Rousseau never had to search for a place to lay his head; on the contrary, he was "caressed" everywhere he went. As he phrased it in the *Confessions*, the moment his "obligations, affairs, and baggage" required him to "travel by coach," he ceased to be a vagabond and he "played the Monsieur."[7]

With different modes of travel came different destinations and different company. A simple comparison of the modern scholarly annotations of the respective books of the *Confessions* reveals the contrast between the types of people he met on foot and those he met while riding. With the exception of occasional protectors or patrons, on foot Jean-Jacques had only anonymous companions, in the sense that their low social status condemned them to anonymity. What do we know about the "Moors," the bandits he encountered in Turin? Who were the "three sluts and villainous bed-fellows" who sojourned with him at the Hospice of Saint-Esprit? Where fled the pederasts he met at Turin and Lyons? It is as impossible to find a trace of the Monsieur and Madame Sobrun with whom he wandered from Annecy to Turin as it is to identify any of the three Bâcle brothers with whom he traced, still on foot, the return route from Turin to Chambery. No commemorative plaque will ever honor the house, if indeed it is still standing, where a Turinoise woman offered Jean-Jacques a heap of straw for his night's bedding. All these people remain anonymous and unidentifiable. As is the case with other marginals, they have left behind but fleeting traces, and these only when misfortune plagued them—except, it is understood, those who had the good fortune to encounter a Jean-Jacques on their errant paths. But these few have neither statistical nor sociological significance.

Rousseau "ascended" to Paris in 1742, his pockets bulging with his system of musical notation and letters of recommendation from Monsieur de Mably; from this point on he encountered the other kind of marginality, that of the debutant intellectual out to make his fortune. He had been to Paris before, at an earlier stage in his life; the city he approached at that time showed an inhospitable countenance which perfectly matched his then low position in society: "As I entered the Saint-Marceau quarter, all I saw were dirty, narrow streets and evil black houses with an air of squalor and poverty, filled with beggars, carters, stocking-menders, hawkers of herb teas and old hats." By contrast, in 1742 he viewed Paris from its "shining side." Did he come this time by foot or by coach? He forgot to say, but the omission suggests that it was by coach.[8] Like the other *petits intellectuels*, Rousseau brought his "great discovery" with him, and like them, he waxed indignant about the Monsieurs of the Academy, comfortably settled in their armchairs, who seldom leapt to recognize his genius or the novelty of his invention. A "very handsome certificate," which scarcely seemed to

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hide their judgment that his "system" was "neither new nor useful," hardly satisfied the ambitions of its author. Nor did the certificate enable Rousseau to leave his garret, described by Mercier as certainly picturesque, but minimally habitable. Like the other more or less marginal intellectuals, Jean-Jacques found his way into the *salons*, sought patrons, and frequented the cafés with his fellows. How different was this kind of marginality from vagrancy! And passage from the one to the other was only possible because Rousseau already had a certain knowledge at his disposal, specifically the "boutique of ideas" he contrived during his stay at Les Charmettes. That Rousseau was self-taught, that he never went to any school, and that he had no connections with a Paris *lycée*, seemed to discredit and marginalize him all the more. No one, neither his compatriots nor probably he, yet realized that this would prove to be his great intellectual advantage.

From the sociological point of view, Rousseau's collaboration on the *Encyclopédie* paved the way for his intellectual career. His reputation was guaranteed by the publication of his first *Discours*. Of course, between the two events came the illumination on his way to Vincennes, the decisive moment of his intellectual formation; but this is another aspect of his biography that need not concern us here. The collaboration on the *Encyclopédie* represented a major advancement, and Rousseau had Diderot and d'Alembert to thank for it. From virtual anonymity, he was catapulted into the "company of the men of letters" of whom all of Europe was beginning to talk. But it was, above all, the uproar provoked by the first *Discours* that consecrated his social advancement. Diderot, who was all too familiar with the social machinations of the world of letters, knew that his friend could only profit by proposing a paradoxical answer to the question posed by the Academy of Dijon. In this society, scandal was a social institution—informal, it is true, but highly significant nonetheless. (Incidentally, a comprehensive sociological study of how scandal functioned in the eighteenth century and since that time remains to be undertaken.[9])

The Rousseau of whom all Paris spoke, who exchanged polemics with the King of Poland, was no longer obliged to endure a marginal existence. Socially, he had succeeded in moving from the periphery to the center. However, at the same time that Jean-Jacques permanently acquired a higher social status, he persisted in behavior and attitudes characteristic of marginality, of the vagabond as well as of the *petit intellectuel*. Obviously, we have in mind his affair with Thérèse, the semiliterate servant girl and, especially, his abandonment of their children. We shall have to consider more closely Jean-Jacques' justifications for this behavior. Whatever the reasons, let us simply observe for now that the children of Jean-Jacques and Thérèse wound up among their own, among the children of the marginals, the unwed mothers, the vagabonds, the rural and urban poor. Of course, it could be objected that Jean-Rond d'Alembert was after all an illegitimate child abandoned by his mother. But among the many foundlings, the son of Madame de Tencin and the few other aristocratic rejects bear neither statistical nor sociological significance.

Voluntary Marginality

At that point in his career when Rousseau abandoned his children, he was certainly not obliged to do so by material or social constraints. Nevertheless, when he first admitted to the deed, he presented it as a course of action which

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had been forced upon him. Thus he wrote to Madame de Francueil: "Nature wants us to bear children because the Earth produces the wherewithal to nourish the whole world; yet it is the condition of the rich, your condition, which robs mine of the bread for my children."[10] In its indictment of social inequality, in its treatment of poverty as a collective condition, this justification is remarkable. To such considerations we shall return. This was not, however, Rousseau's only justification for the act; he did advance other grounds. He wished to make his children into "workers and peasants rather than adventurers and fortune seekers." He considered himself a citizen of Plato's Republic, entrusting the State with the education of his children. He feared the baneful influence of Thérèse's family, who would have turned the children into "monsters," etc.[11] We need not discuss here the psychological mechanisms behind these multiple justifications which suggest Jean-Jacques' rending mental anguish. Let us simply observe that they evidence a fundamental ambivalence: Rousseau regarded and explained his marginal behavior as both self-willed and imposed, as both chosen and undergone.

But this ambivalence, this almost inextricable antimony to which Rousseau so ardently clung, did it not color his experience as a marginal from the start?

Let us return to that memorable day—March 14, 1728. Did Jean-Jacques really *find* the gates of Geneva already closed? Or rather did he *wait* until the gates had shut behind him? He abandoned a city which stifled him; he divorced himself from a well-ordered life-style which he could not accept for his own. The highways of Savoy confronted him fatefully. But did he not also seek them out, embrace them as paths to freedom? Curious vagabond! Naturally, his field of experience largely corresponded to that of his vagrant companions, of the Bâcles and the Sabrans. But the lad who had read Plutarch and Grotius, whose head was full of novels, brought a whole different range of expectations to this experience shared by so many of the eighteenth-century poor. He wrote, "The independence which I believed I had acquired was the only sentiment which moved me. Free, and my own master, I believed I could do anything, reach anything; I had but to fling myself upward to rise and fly through the air. Secure, I entered the vast space of the world; my merit would fill this space . . . by showing me that I would take possession of the universe."[12]

One's expectations always affect one's experiences. The vision of the future in the mind's eye calls forth certain choices which in turn influence the future course of events. For Jean-Jacques, the conflict between his social experiences and his range of expectations was all the more intense because it was constantly nourished by the extraordinary imagination of the vagabond who was so unlike the others.

The submissive marginal and the self-willed marginal, constraint and liberation—Jean-Jacques would remain torn between these antinomies throughout his life. At a given moment in 1756, one side of this conflict seemed to prevail definitively over the other. By undertaking his "Great Reform," by leaving Paris and drastically changing his life-style, Rousseau willingly placed himself again on the fringes of the society in which he had at long last succeeded. The marginality to which he now retreated bore faint resemblance to the marginality to which he had been subjected as a debutant intellectual. Jean-Jacques was a renowned writer, over whom the *salons* and literati quarreled, and of whom the

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public (which is also to say the publishers) had great expectations. It was thus by deliberate choice that he withdrew and redefined himself as an outsider with respect to a society which had finally opened its doors to him. No longer did society push him to the fringes; on the contrary, he rejected society by choosing his own unique form of marginality.

His choice, however, had multiple underlying motivations, and their ambiguous nature became more and more disquieting. In fact, his new marginality was now an accusatory marginality. He rejected Paris, "the illustrious city, the city of noise, smoke, and mire, where women no longer believe in Honor, nor men in Virtue," where the "crowd is but a waste land."[13] Leaving this city was tantamount to denouncing a society which debased and degraded mankind. In withdrawing from society, Rousseau indicted its anonymous relationships which substituted appearance for reality; he indicted its false and unjust social hierarchy; he indicted a whole social system which continually threatened the independence and freedom of the individual. But by accusing the society Paris symbolized, did not Rousseau in the same stroke make that society responsible for the moral and social ills which it had fostered? Does not society force the good man, the man who seeks "love and happiness and innocence" to flee?[14] To choose to live on the margin with respect to such a center is a challenge and a revolt, but is it not also an act of self-defense? Does not the rebel appear to himself and others as a victim of threatening and violent forces?

Jean-Jacques envisioned his retreat as an idyll peopled by "les belles âmes," and he certainly did not wish to shut himself off completely. Nevertheless, he had triggered a course of events over which he no longer had control. The marginality of the vagabond as well as the marginality of a debutant intellectual necessarily involved contact with others. On the roads of Savoy and Italy, as in the Paris cafés, Jean-Jacques had increased his contacts, met new people, knotted new friendships, some fleeting, some more or less long-lasting. By contrast, this new marginality to which he had voluntarily withdrawn caught him in the cogwheels of his own aggression and self-defense, and increasingly cut him off from others. Thus, from a certain point onward the discourse on marginality merges with the discourse on solitude to the point where they are virtually indistinguishable. "Embittered by the injustices which I had experienced and by those which I witnessed, often afflicted by the disorder of life around me, I viewed my era and my contemporaries with scorn, and feeling that I would never find a place among them which would satisfy my heart, little by little I detached myself from the society of men and created for myself another."[15]

We need not here insist upon the antinomies of solitude, which we have discussed extensively elsewhere.[16] Jean-Jacques lived out the contradictions of his rootless condition with a sense of drama that was indeed intense, perhaps even pathological. Self-chosen solitude, yet also imposed; unhappy solitude, but nonetheless heroic. Rousseau sometimes experienced it as an expression of freedom, sometimes as a symbol of threat and danger; sometimes as supreme injustice, sometimes as his only chance to attain ultimate bliss. He was persecuted to the point of retreating into total solitude, because he was just and he demanded justice. But was it not in fact his duty to bring to light, if not to dramatize, the injustice which persecuted him? In the final analysis, did he not make it his duty to submit to trials by bringing them upon himself? The new

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marginality to which Rousseau subjected himself redefined the speaker, the perspective from which he spoke, and the moral and social position for which he stood. He who had "no estate" but yet knew "all estates" and was "nothing" opened through his discourse a space wherein it became possible to speak only of himself, but yet still show his future readers man "in all of Nature's verity."[17] Being uprooted, a stranger to the world, was for Jean-Jacques both a cruel destiny and the greatest privilege. Upon the wanderer who was no longer a vagabond, upon the writer who refused to be an intellectual, upon his shoulders fell the moral mission to tell men as they were the whole truth about themselves, who rejected him, and about man as he could be and should be.

Marginality Refused

Even in the most dramatic moments of his life, when the contradictions of his solitude and his manner of dealing with them all but reduced him to a state of madness, even in his blackest moods, Rousseau never forgot his apprenticeship to inequality. The lesson he learned from inequality was an essential dimension of his first experiences as a marginal. His discourse on marginality is bound up with his revolt against inequality. By the mere fact that the social system is unjust and inegalitarian, it produces poor people and makes of them marginals. One had to experience poverty firsthand to know marginality, especially the marginality of the vagabond highways. Poverty is the most elementary experience, semiphysical, yet instructive. It can be summed up in the simple state of hunger: to need bread and be denied it. "The travail of the wretched comes from material things and from the rigors of fate which weigh upon him. No acclimatization can remove his physical sensation of hunger, fatigue, or hardship; a good mind and wisdom in no way exempt him from the woes of his condition."[18]

It would perhaps be useful to recall that the ideologies and attitudes of this "Age of Enlightenment" increasingly abandoned the traditional symbolism of the poor person as the image of Christ. The ideology which replaced it considered poverty as a vice and the poor as a social menace. The poor person was regarded as one who did not work, a fact which could only be explained by a refusal to work. Therefore the poor must be forced to work—the governing principle behind the "great imprisonment"—or else the poor must be encouraged to transcend their poverty by working—the governing principle behind the philanthropic projects of the period. Rousseau stood athwart these dominant ideas of his time. He inverted, so to speak, the relationship between poverty and work: in an unjust and inegalitarian society, one is poor because one works. The poor man is he who is condemned to earn his bread by labor. This is why he is continually menaced by misery, why he experiences hunger, hardship, and fatigue.

The poor man must endure hunger and oppression. For Rousseau, vagrancy was equal to social oppression. It was after his first stay in Paris, while returning on foot to Savoy, that the young Jean-Jacques learned a truth which he "would never forget." The incident merits a brief summary. Fatigued and famished, Jean-Jacques entered a peasant's home and asked for something to eat. Although he promised to pay for his food, the peasant offered him only "skimmed milk and course barley bread, saying that that was all he had." In fact, the peasant

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mistrusted this young man who looked too good to be a simple vagabond. He mistook Rousseau for a "clerk and a cellar rat," the sort who was always spying everywhere in the service of the tax farmers. The peasant fed his visitor properly only after he was thoroughly convinced that the latter was not "one of those people." "He made me understand that he hid his wine on account of the managers, that he hid his bread on account of the poll tax, and that he would be a lost man if anyone could suspect that he was not dying of starvation . . . Here lay the seed of the unquenchable hatred which has since infected my heart [with rage] against the sufferings of the wretched populace and against its oppressors. This man, though well off, dared not eat the bread which he had earned by the sweat of his brow and could avoid perdition only by outwardly showing the same misery which reigned around him."[19] Jean-Jacques conserved this hatred throughout the time when he no longer dined with peasants, but with dukes and princes. "I have a violent aversion for the estates who rule over others . . . I hate great men; I hate their rank, their hardness, their pettiness, their prejudices, and their whole lives, and I would hate them even more if I scorned them less."[20]

It is one of the greater paradoxes which bespeak the singularity of Rousseau's experience that his hatred would be expressed in a letter destined for an aristocrat who occupied one of the highest seats in the magistracy. Rare were his fellow vagabonds who knew how to read and write, and none of them wrote to princes!

The state of hunger and hardship is an irreducible existential experience. One truly knows only one's own hunger; one fully faces up only to one's own hardship. To think and speak of one's travail in terms of inequality and social oppression is another matter. As Jean Starobinski so justly observed, social inequality is *par excellence* a collective experience achieved *with* some people, and, by definition, *against* others.[21] Those with whom Jean-Jacques identified were not only the individuals he met on his errant wanderings. This identification was bound up with the never-ending quest for his self-identity, and was made possible by the collective concept of the People. With one stroke, then, the discourse on marginality opens a realm where personal experiences mingle with ideology and politics. In this realm also took place Rousseau's subversion of traditional values, whose great importance in the history of ideologies cannot be overestimated. If it is the People that the social system drives to its fringes, then the very terms "center" and "periphery" exchange places and meanings.

Thus Rousseau wrote:

> It is the People who constitute the human race; that which is not of the People accounts for so little that it is not worth the trouble of counting. Man is the same in all classes; if this is so, then the most numerous class deserves the most respect. Before the man who thinks, all social distinctions disappear; he sees the same passions, the same sentiments in the rogue as in the gentleman. All that differentiates them for him is their language, only a more and less polished surface, and if some essential difference distinguishes them, it is at the level of their most hidden prejudices. The People show themselves as they are, and they are not likable. But the men of high station must disguise themselves, for if they showed their true colors, they would indeed be horrifying.[22]

The dominating order which subjects the People to inequality and oppression simultaneously degrades them and drives them to society's fringe. Thus the

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field laborer is scorned, "burdened with taxes which are necessary to maintain the luxury of the rich, condemned to spend his life between travail and hunger." Consequently, he is forced to abandon the countryside and to seek in towns the bread that he should have been bringing there instead. And so one sees abandoned villages, "the fields lying fallow and the highways flooded with wretched citizens who have turned beggars or thieves, and who are destined to end their misery some day on the wheel or on the dung heap."[23] In the cities where the rich "hold the law in their pocketbooks," the People risk being reduced to a mob. In their misery, the poor prefer bread to freedom.[24]

The People, constantly threatened by physical and moral degradation, are never wholly corrupted. They remain the only "true judge of morals."[25] The system of social inequality which drives the People to the fringes also, in the same breath, rejects the values which the People produce and embody: beauty, truth, goodness, and justice. When the People are left to their own devices, they are, in the simplicity of their morals, the closest to Nature. They maintain among themselves face-to-face relations, as opposed to the alienating anonymity of the large cities. The People are poor, it is true, but it is not their fault. Is it not the People alone who still know what happiness is? In his increasingly depraved world, "justice and humanity are a commoner's words."[26]

To discuss the concept of the People in Rousseau's work would exceed the framework which we have established here. In truth, it is a key concept which assumes multiple functions. It serves both as a descriptive concept which refers to empirical realities and as a symbol of all the values for which Jean-Jacques Rousseau stood. He joined his personal experience to reflections on history and politics; he provided a link between the rejection of society as it is and the dream of another just and equitable society. Let us simply observe that in his vision of the egalitarian City where the People are sovereign, Rousseau rejects social marginality with remarkable vigor. The City of the *Contrat social* has been variously defined. From our perspective, it appears above all as a just and fraternal society which, as a result of internal cohesion, knows absolutely no marginality.

In the *Contrat social* there is never any question of marginal people. The new City needs neither almshouses nor philanthropic institutions. Nevertheless, does not something troubling and unspoken persist in the text? What about those who refuse to obey the common will and to whom applies the famous formula, "they will be forced to be free"? Where do they arise, all those for whom are intended the prisons, mentioned albeit in a footnote, above whose gates one reads the word *Libertas*? What about those whom the City is authorized to banish as "unsociable and incapable of sincerely loving the laws and justice" and even to condemn to death?[27] The social and moral forces which would generate marginals in the new City are never clearly defined. On the other hand, a whole mechanism for rejecting and repressing social misfits is laid in place. In the face of this menacing presence, there could well be a young man sixteen years old who might be tempted to tarry outside the gates of the virtuous City, waiting for them to shut behind him and to open at the same time the paths to freedom to be discovered.

Being a marginal is a social condition, but it is also a relationship with the world. At the time when Jean-Jacques had abandoned the condition of both the

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vagabond and the debutant intellectual, he still presented in his life and in his work the relationship of marginality befitting an outsider. Of course, sociologically speaking, this contradicted his continuing social advancement. Indeed, what an extraordinary triumph this young vagabond achieved, who became one of the greatest writers of his time and who attained glory and the greatest success in his own lifetime. But did not the events of his life count for less than the visions which they caused to arise? How striking that Rousseau's life and career seemed in the eyes of his contemporaries a sort of countermodel with respect to the other exemplary intellectual success of the age, Voltaire. In contrast to Voltaire, Rousseau never fully integrated himself into the intellectual elite. He made his rootlessness and poverty the symbols of his independence. His success rested on his accusatory marginality, and vice versa. The vitality of his work was fed by his failures and frustrations. If he rejected society, it was because the latter trampled him; if he set himself up as an implacable judge of society, it was because society was unjust and false. He identified himself with the People, both the reality and the myth, and exalted himself in the role of their defender, if not their spokesman. Intellectual that he became, he was, however, separated from the People by his whole destiny, and he was painfully and guiltily aware of this separation.

Rousseau was never fully able either to cast off his marginality or to secure it. His social condition and his individual fate created an entire mythology in which the visions of his marginality prevailed over the realities. To be marginal and rootless sets up a moral model of existing in and confronting the world. By the end of Rousseau's life, and especially after his death, this model was taken up and spread along a collective network of symbolic representations. The model imposed itself upon other hopes and expectations, frustrations and revolts, like a legendary destiny or an exemplary mission to be fulfilled.

Translated by Steven Raichlen

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[2]The phrase of Cliquot de Blervache, in 1789, cited by F. Furet, "Pour une définition des classes inférieures à l'époque moderne," *Annales E. S. C.*, 1963: 459–474.

[3]O. H. Hufton offers a remarkable study entitled *The Poor of 18th Century France* (Oxford, 1974). Also see J. P. Gutton, *La Société et les pauvres. L'exemple de la généralité de Lyon (1534–1789)* (Paris, 1971); *La Société et les pauvres en Europe (XVI^e–XVIII^e siècles)* (Paris, 1974). A. Vexliard's *Introduction à la sociologie du vagabondage* (Paris, 1956) is older, but still useful.

[4]L. S. Mercier, *Tableau de Paris*, vol. 1 (Amsterdam, 1782) pp. 10–11. The *petits intellectuels*, their recruitment, their living conditions, their activities, and so on, still await a comprehensive study. But see the stimulating work of R. Darnton, "The High Enlightenment and the Low-Life of Literature in Prerevolutionary France," *Past and Present*, May, 1971.

[5]See *Les Confessions*, vol. 1, p. 101, and also the manuscript variant on p. 1728.

[6]Ibid., p. 54.

[7]See ibid., p. 59, for the projected voyage in Italy and the change in mode of transportation. In this text Jean-Jacques presents himself as a victim who was forced to undergo this change. See the *Correspondance complète de Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, ed. R. A. Leigh, vol. 11, p. 51.

[8]See *Les Confessions*, p. 159, pp. 281–282.

[9]Today, scandal, as a social institution, is dying out. Everyone wants to cause a scandal. There is even a whole industry devoted to causing series of scandals. Is this not precisely the reason why it has become all but impossible to scandalize anyone anymore?

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[10]*Correspondance Générale de J.-J. Rousseau*, ed. Dufour, vol. 2, p. 143.
[11]*Les Confessions*, p. 357; *Rêveries* vol. 1, p. 1087.
[12]*Les Confessions*, p. 45.
[13]*Émile*, vol. 4, p. 691; *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, vol. 3, p. 236.
[14]*Émile*, p. 691.
[15]*Lettres à Malesherbes*, vol. 1, pp. 1134–1135.
[16]See B. Baczko, *Rousseau, Solitude et communauté* (Paris: La Haye, 1974), pp. 232–234.
[17]*Les Confessions*, p. 5.
[18]*Émile*, p. 510.
[19]*Les Confessions*, pp. 163–164.
[20]*Lettres à Malesherbes*, p. 1145.
[21]See Jean Starobinski, "Tout le mal provient de l'inégalité," *Europe*, 391/392: 139 ff.
[22]*Émile*, p. 509.
[23]*Discours sur l'inégalité*, vol. 3, p. 206.
[24]*Lettres Ecrites de la Montagne*, vol. 3, pp. 889–890.
[25]*Discours sur l'inégalité*, pp. 222–223.
[26]*Correspondance Complète*, vol. 3, p. 231.
[27]*Le Contrat social*, vol. 3, pp. 364, 376, 440, 468.

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JEAN STAROBINSKI

The Accuser and the Accused

ROUSSEAU TELLS US that his writing career was born from "virtue outraged."[1] The "four or five years" of "effervescence"[2] that follow the illumination he experienced on the road to Vincennes are years of anger and intransigence. He went to literature as one goes to war. He denounces civilization's evils. Answers and attacks coming from all sides, he attempts to retaliate blow for blow: "I saw nothing but error and folly in the doctrine of our wise men, nothing but oppression and misery in our social order."[3] Later, Rousseau was to note that this intensity of virtue and endless defiance were "states most contrary to his nature,"[4] but if the attitude was exaggerated, it was not feigned: "I never acted."[5]

Confronting the public, Rousseau steps forward as an accuser: "The contempt which my deep reflections had inspired in me for the customs, principles and prejudices of my age made me insensible to the mockery of those who followed them; and I crushed their little witticisms with my observations, as I might crush an insect between my fingers."[6] Hence the theatrical quality in his writings and in his attitude. He conforms to models of behavior borrowed from antiquity; he wants to communicate his ideas with the most energetic language, and he succeeds in being hailed as a master of eloquence. For Diderot, he is the "censor of letters, the Cato and the Brutus of our age."[7] The successfully reincarnated model is that of the magistrate or of the lone hero, who reminds a forgetful community of the forsaken virtues and civic values.

Rousseau's accusatory attitude must, in my view, be given very serious consideration. His system of thought cannot be separated from the way he expresses it. The rhetoric in Rousseau is not an external or superadded element; it is intrinsic to the intellectual message. Here is a man who makes his readers know that he belatedly begins a career as a writer because he finds it urgent to warn the civilized world against lethal dangers. He wants the public to see him as someone who has decided to start a new life entirely devoted to truth. And, as he foresees a premature death, he feels able to reject further compromise and to speak his mind accordingly. The initial gesture of accusation establishes a dramatic relationship between the writer and his contemporaries. The conspicuous nature of that relationship and the resulting existential developments are no less important than the ideas and certainties that are at the heart of Rousseau's argument. The texts themselves, if fully perceived, oblige us to take account of this dramatic aspect, and in so doing we do not fall prey to any fallacy, either biographical or psychological.

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One has only to pay attention to what is actually being said by Rousseau; a challenge is being made by a man from outside, by a citizen of Geneva, who wills himself to be a stranger to the evil he is describing. From there on, Rousseau's subsequent writings and the personal situation they imply can be considered as the logical consequences of his first intervention as a self-appointed prosecutor. He not only has to prove that his accusation is based on coherent and valid principles, but at the same time he is bound to experience all the further predicaments deriving from the conflict he first entered into.

For a pragmatic analysis, that is, for a careful study of literary work as action modifying both the writer's and the reader's mind, Rousseau offers a model experience. What ought to come out of a relationship with the public which the writer has initially established as a justice-seeking aggression? It seems to me that Rousseau's inner evolution, as manifested by his successive works, answers this question with great clarity. One is tempted to consider it still relevant, exemplary and premonitory, in the context of modern attitudes which strike us by their similarity to Rousseau's. To be sure, some retrospective illusion is probably mixed with what we cannot help reading as the contemporary message of the Rousseauan adventure; most readers allow themselves to be led into "overinterpretation." But this very fact cannot be disregarded. However mistakenly, Rousseau invites our interpretations, seeming to offer us in his person and thoughts interpretative tools applicable to our time.

The notion of accusation provides a very effective system of reference if one wishes to distinguish several periods in Rousseau's works, dividing them into groups. The first group of writings is clearly marked by the identification of society's evils and assigns a relatively small place to personal apologetics. This group of works includes the first two *Discours*, the Preface to *Narcisse*, and even the *Lettre à d'Alembert* (even though Rousseau thinks that the last marks a change of style and that the initial indignation does not prevail[8]). Let us add that an important part of the writings on music is prompted by the spirit of accusation; they fight the "noise" and the harmonic artifices of French music; they seek to discredit Rameau; and one should not forget that Rousseau's musical polemic is more or less simultaneous with his social polemic. The second group is that of the "criteriological" works. They define and systematically develop the principles and values in the name of which the accusation has been made. They are also, to a certain extent, conciliatory works that indicate under what conditions remedies or palliatives can intrude. They include the fiction of *La Nouvelle Héloïse* (1760), the half-fiction of the *Emile* (1762), and the theoretical constructions of the *Contrat social*, including their application in the cases of Corsica and Poland. Finally comes the group of works where the initial situation is reversed and Rousseau speaks as the *accused*, rejecting anything that might convict him of guilt to the point of ascribing to interfering influences—that of Diderot for instance—the bitter tone of his first writings. First, intellectual apologetics prevail: Rousseau defends his thoughts more than his person in the *Lettre à Monseigneur de Beaumont* (1763) and the *Lettre de la Montagne* (1764). Then, Rousseau devotes himself entirely to personal pleading; he defends Jean-Jacques' *true image* against the monstrous image that the "directors" of the plot (so he thinks) succeeded in having universally believed. The initial accusation has produced the entire body of writings, through a vast cycle of transformations in which the initial conflict has been lived to its final expression.

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Accusatorial thought fosters antinomies; it moves forward by antitheses; it is spontaneously "Manichaean." Rousseau's first *Discours* is built on strong oppositions. After unfolding the image of the triumph of light over ignorance, Rousseau makes a reversal. The brilliant existence of organized societies is but a superficial "polish"; under this deceptive semblance is a concealed being, dominated by pride, instigating hate and estranging consciences. Human relationships are thus perverted. The apparent good will that orders social relationships hides a deadly combat. The luxury of a small number does not bring prosperity to others, but misery. This moral disorder is *new*; it accompanies the "renewal" of the arts and sciences. Another system of oppositions is then set up—the world of today versus the world of our ancestors (the analogy: Imperial Rome versus Republican Rome); urbanized societies versus rustic or primitive societies (the analogy: Athens versus Sparta). In addition, there are traditional ethical oppositions: the superfluous versus the necessary; disease (corruption, softness) versus health (integrity, ruggedness); luxury versus frugality; femininity and cowardice versus virility and military courage; private interests versus patriotic devotion, and so on. And if, at the end of the *Discours*, the arts and sciences are not utterly condemned, it is thanks to a new antinomy: true science (reserved for a small number and cultivated in the Academies) versus pseudoscience (practiced by a multitude, by a "populace"[9]).

This rather short discourse, consistent with academic ritual, sparks a huge debate and makes of Rousseau a man very much in fashion. Was it, however, so unique in 1750 to attack luxury, frivolous eloquence, "fatal arts,"[10] "vain sciences"? Were cultural optimism and belief in progress so widespread? Of course, at the time of the launching of the *Encyclopédie*, a large section of public opinion was ready to trust in the progress of knowledge, the technical improvements, the multiplied amenities produced by the practice of reason in human affairs. In this respect, the "moderns" seem to have triumphed over the "ancients" once and for all. However, here is Rousseau who reopens this quarrel. His purpose is not to affirm that the taste, arts, and knowledge of the moderns are inferior to those of the ancients—he gives in to his contemporaries on this point—but to declare that a *moral* decay accompanies scientific and technical progress. But these accusations, these objections, formulated in the name of ethical values, are not *new*. The preachers had frequently made such objections. How can one explain the scandal which, in 1750–1751, effectively assures Rousseau's success? Did he do anything other than bid higher? Did he invent nothing but the "rhetorical colors" that made his argument biting? Is he different only because of the provocative accent of his hyperbolic eloquence?

In Rousseau's accusations against the arts and sciences, reprobation is expressed in various ways. One of the most frequent is the repetitiously used qualificative; *frivolous*, *vain*, *fatal* are words that recur constantly with him. These words belong to a preacher's vocabulary. His contemporaries did not fail to recognize that. Someone from Lyons writes: "It seems to me that he is the most vigorous writer in our century. How well, for example, this man would have preached!"[11] Talleyrand will declare: "When one reads Rousseau, one believes oneself to be in the confessional."[12] This, in fact, is the realization of one of Rousseau's childhood dreams. Let us reread the first book of the *Confessions*: ". . . I fancied myself as a preacher . . . one day Uncle Bernard read us a very fine sermon in his serious style . . . we then began to make up sermons."[13]

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Rousseau's attacks against "vain curiosity" continue a long history of religious polemics against all that distracts the individual from the "sole necessity," which is a concern for salvation. Rousseau concludes his *Discours* with a peroration that echoes the *redi in te ipsum* from Augustine:

> O virtue! Sublime science of simple souls, are so many difficulties and preparations needed to know you? Are not your principles engraved in all hearts, and is it not enough to learn your laws to commune with oneself and listen to the voice of one's conscience in the silence of the passions? That is true philosophy, let us know how to be satisfied with it; and without envying the glory of those famous men who are immortalized in the republic of letters, let us try to put between them and us that glorious distinction noted between two great people long ago: that the one knew how to speak well, the other to act well.[14]

What did religious authors write? Let us listen to Pascal: "Physical science will not console me for the ignorance of morality in the time of affliction. But the science of ethics will always console me for the ignorance of the physical sciences."[15] And also to Malebranche, who, although a follower of Descartes and less hostile to scientific curiosity, writes: "He who communes most with himself, and listens to the inner truth in the greatest silence of his senses and his passions, is the most solidly virtuous."[16] It is also Malebranche who uses the terms Rousseau will borrow to maintain that the law, which is "the inviolable order of the minds," is "engraved in man's heart." In the *Entretiens affectifs*, Fénelon writes: "Alas! How many grave doctors do not see anything while thinking they know it all! They do not want to be ignorant of anything . . . Oh! how they would hate all that curious research, if they knew man well! . . . Oh! What can we learn from that which is nothing? There is only one infinite truth, which absorbs everything and which does not leave any curiosity outside itself: all else is but nothingness, and therefore a lie."[17] But this similarity between Rousseau and the theologians, the solidarity in their accusations against the "curious sciences," against luxury, and against inequality, cannot conceal an essential difference. Rousseau and the theologians invoke quite different norms and authorities as the basis of their accusations.

In the preachers' sermons, the accusation is directed against the sins of the world, the idolatry of earthly possessions, *the pride of the libido sciendi*; their preaching invites the pursuit of true possessions, which are spiritual life, salvation, grace from Christ. Fénelon exclaims: "O Jesus, I no longer have any other doctor than you, any other book but your bosom. There I learn everything while being ignorant of everything and while abasing myself. There I live the same life you live in your Father's bosom."[18] In the funeral oration of Louis le Grand, in which the luxury of the Court is strongly condemned, Massillon enraptures his listeners with the first sentence: "God alone is great, brethren!"[19]

These examples ought to suffice. They permit us to understand the novel effect of Rousseau's *Discours*: the accusation is not accompanied by a religious call. Rousseau's disturbing innovation does not lie in reproving the evils endured by mankind in society; it consists in not making of this reproval the premise of an act of contrition, the prelude to a conversion. Rousseau does not seek to revive his reader's faith, as his predecessors did; he makes vivid an ethicopolitical regret. To the evils of society, he contrasts the image of another social order.

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When he exclaims "O virtue," this term must be understood in its civic, political, "Machiavellian" sense. The final antithesis goes back to the Plutarchian confrontation between Athens and Sparta which ran through the whole discourse. Of course, the antithesis which contrasts the "polite" city with the "virtuous" city is not at all new. But it insistently takes the place, in the *Discours*, of the expected antithesis which would have contrasted worldly virtues with spiritual virtues. In order to innovate, it was enough to surprise the reader with something not to be expected in traditional academic discourse; a social ideal is openly preferred to a religious ideal. The social ideal, this other imagined society, is by no means a utopia. It is the idealization of a lost world, the happy picture of a frugal past, where virtuous *doing* prevailed over dissimulative *speaking*. Wherever preachers deplored the devastating effects of godlessness, Rousseau, on the contrary, points to the disappearance of *civisme*: "We have physicists, geometers, chemists, astronomers, poets, musicians, painters; *we no longer have citizens.*"[20] Nevertheless, Rousseau knew perfectly well what he owed to religious tradition, and in response to the attacks, he sets up his line of defense on the positions held by religious apologetics. During the controversy evoked by his *Discours*, and particularly in his response to the King of Poland, Rousseau points out that the observations judged as shocking in his *Discours* are in perfect agreement with the Scriptures and the Church Fathers; he mentions the example of the "twelve poor fishermen and artisans" who have spread the teachings of Christ.[21] Yet even when Rousseau refers to the Scriptures, he is concerned not with "eternal life," but with man's life on this earth, man's happiness among his fellow-men. Hence, Rousseau places himself on the level of "worldly" existence and institutions which interests his friends, the philosophers; like them, he is ready to consider man as a being of passion and needs, who seeks satisfaction in this world—the remaining question is to know which form of existence will guarantee true and full satisfaction. As we have endeavored to show, the most desirable object for Rousseau is the transparency of human relationships, the immediate exchange.[22] Rousseau has often expressed his belief in an afterlife, but, in his systematic thought, he always subordinated religious to civic ideals.[23]

He denounces like the theologians, but he denounces the *political* nature of evil. One can immediately see that Rousseau is predestined to fight on two fronts. The theologians will bear him a grudge for abandoning the traditional *via salutis* for the benefit of civic or personal values: the "*merely civil religion*" of the *Contrat* subordinates faith to a political finality. As for the philosophers, they see in Rousseau a deserter from the fight for enlightenment, since with an argumentation of religious origin, he comes to throw doubt on everything they are attempting to promote—morality of interests, apology for luxury, enrichment through commerce . . .

The substitution of the secular value (*civisme*) for the sacred value (salvation) does not discard the sacred forever. When one answers in political terms a religious question, almost inevitably the political answer is likely to keep a religious undertone. The element of moral guilt which the religious accusation awakened finds its atonement in the imagination of another social order, thus conferring on political schemes an irrational guilt-suppressing function. Even though we have passed from an injunction religious in character (salvation) to a political

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ideal (hence secular), it can be said, nevertheless, that *civisme* has become a *substitutive sacred value*; it breathes an intensity of regret or promise without which it would not match the vehemence of the accusation. What has often been described as a *secularization* of the hope of salvation, must also be perceived as a *sacralization* of the idealized forms of political life. Let us add to this the following observation by way of corollary. Whereas Christian moralists (and particularly those who draw their inspiration from Jansenism: Pascal, Nicole, La Rochefoucauld) see in *amour-propre*, in the play of illusory appearances, an ontological blemish linked to original sin and henceforth inseparable from human nature, Rousseau places the responsibility on society, on the vices of social organization. By so doing, he does not merely propose (as Cassirer has shown[24]) an original solution to the problem of theodicy; he is not content with exculpating God's Providence and rehabilitating the primitive nature of man. He further strengthens his accusation against society with an argument based on permanent and irrefutable causes of uneasiness—the lack of a complete and frank understanding between individuals, malevolence, selfish interests—which it is difficult not to encounter everywhere and at any moment, since they result, in fact, from the human condition. Rousseau, who was one of the first to indict society, immediately felt how much strength his indictment would gain, should he fuse the sociopolitical dependency endured by individuals to the ontological dependency resulting from the fact that a part of their being is entrusted to the opinion of their fellow men, as if both resulted from the shortcomings of the existing social order. This is still a familiar device. The accusation always hits its target and always finds a listener when it joins the wrongs of society to the unavoidable imperfections of human relations. The accuser thus mobilizes an existential dissatisfaction on behalf of his cause. It touches us at the level of some obscure uneasiness. What a relief to think that such an uneasiness is not irremediably tied to our very existence, and that we will be able to rid ourselves of it at the cost of a politicomoral conversion and a change of exterior circumstances. The accusation, still so framed in our own time (but according to the model suggested by Rousseau), gives life to the hope of ontological change through the effect of social change. Hence the hangover on the morning after the revolution for those who expected a totally new life; the change in economic and political relations has not after all pushed back our ontological limits. (The point here is not to make Rousseau responsible, but to indicate how he has prefigured the radical proposition, which, by sacralizing politics, mixes the metaphysical expectation of salvation with the theory of social change.[25])

In Rousseau, the writer appears in a new role and a new status. He takes upon himself the task of moral preaching which, up to now, exclusively and almost professionally belonged to the Church. At the same time, he assumes the right to examine the institutions and the deficiencies inherent in the political organization to which, following the traditional division of labor in France, most clergymen had previously paid assiduous deference. Finally, he expresses his unique individuality by capturing the public's attention, by becoming a legend in his lifetime, under his Christian name of Jean-Jacques. Rousseau is certainly not the only nor the first intellectual to exercise this power, but he is able at the first attempt to do so masterfully and with a rare intuition of the reception which a free writer, not bound to any corporate body, can expect in

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doing so. It is this talent, as much as their conflict of ideas, that explains the animosity of Voltaire, his rival in the exercise of such power. Rousseau attacks with the intonations of Fénelon or Massillon, but his political and pedagogical views are expressed in the manner of Locke or Montesquieu. He studied neither theology nor law. He holds no position in the state: he speaks as an outsider. So, in each sphere of criticism, when he proposes a theory based on new foundations, he appears as an outsider, as someone without the necessary qualifications to intervene—hence the nickname, Docteur Pansophe, pinned on him by Voltaire. His propensity to assume so many roles, to claim competence in so many fields—thus being a *philosopher*—is not foreign to his feeling that he had antagonized those who, in each field, assumed the right of sole competence to decide. When Rousseau thinks of the league of his persecutors and declares that league to be *universal*, he combines in his mind the retorts of all those whose special preserves he has invaded. He has interfered in the fields of established theology, politics, pedagogy, music, and medicine, and is convinced that he has incurred the animosity of priests, statesmen, teachers, musicians, and doctors.[26]

The logic of accusatorial thought implies also that antinomies of *thought* be sustained and authenticated by a *living* antagonism. The accusation compels the one who makes it to act the role of the accuser. The more massive and general the fault denounced, the more isolated the one who, to denounce it, sets himself apart. The heroic posture Rousseau now assumes is that of the challenger animated by ardor of virtue and love for mankind, alone against all, speaking to alienated and enslaved people about a community of the past. How revealing is the prosopopoeia of Fabricius, the only direct testimony about the illumination on the road to Vincennes: the virtuous consul, come back from the dead, addresses the decadent Romans and contrasts the image of the Senate of Republican Rome.[27] Rousseau spontaneously adopts the attitude of someone from *another world* (in all senses) who, standing alone, admonishes a crowd. This is one of his favorite fantasies. The *Discours sur l'inégalité*, again, is built on this pattern: several times, he places an orator alone in front of a large group. He himself is that orator in the Dedication where he addresses the whole Republic of Geneva. In the preamble to the *Discours*, he imagines himself to be in the lyceum of Athens, "having the Platos and the Xenocrates as judges and mankind as audience."[28] At the beginning of the second part, when he calls to mind the taking of the land, he imagines again an individual who should have appeared, alone against all others, to "shout" a solemn warning to his fellowmen.[29] Thus, on every occasion, openly revealing his identity, claiming the quality of citizen of Geneva, Rousseau asserts himself against the French, as someone from *elsewhere*, someone who speaks another tongue (*Barbarus hic ego sum quia non intelligor illis*[30]); on the other hand, facing his fellow citizens of Geneva, he is the witness of the morality of another age. If he wants to be Genevan in order to proclaim his difference to the French, then, to his Genevan audience, he wants to offer an alternative idea of Geneva. He thus puts himself in a rhetorical situation which makes of him an exception in the face of evil, he who alone has kept the ability to perceive and denounce corruption and decay. One can see how, wanting to "harmonize" his behavior and his thoughts,[31] Rousseau has been led to assume the role of solitary opponent. Identifying his life with his convictions and building his convictions into an antinomic system,

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Rousseau is forced to espouse the values he has declared lost, disregarded, abandoned, and which he contrasts with the present decadence of the world. Rousseau makes common cause with banished truth, despised virtue, forgotten norms. He can only be right in his accusatorial hyperbole if he stands alone against all. Thus, the significance of these lines in which Rousseau remembers the circumstances and his state of mind when he wrote the *Discours sur l'inégalité*:

> Wandering deep into the forest, I sought and I found the vision of those primitive times, the history of which I proudly traced. I demolished the petty lies of mankind; I dared to strip man's nature naked, to follow the progress of time, and trace the things which have distorted it; and by comparing man as he had made himself with man as he is by nature I showed him in his pretended perfection the true source of his misery. Exalted by these sublime meditations, my soul soared towards the Divinity; and from the height I looked down on my fellow-men pursuing the blind path of their prejudices, of their errors, of their misfortunes and their crimes. Then I cried to them in a feeble voice which they could not hear, "Madmen who ceaselessly complain of Nature, learn that all your misfortunes arise from yourselves!"[32]

One will first note in this account of the *genesis* of the *Discours* how the rhetorical situation of the solitary appeal to mankind—which has been noted in the preceding discussion—is a determining factor in the memory of the author of the *Confessions*. Nevertheless, Rousseau, aware of the faults and miseries of mankind, not only appoints himself their critic and denouncer, but undertakes likewise to go back to the temporal beginning, to "*earliest times*," to "*natural man*," and to raise himself "*near the divinity*." Rousseau moves away from the people he calls his fellow-men in the direction of both the primitive past and the transcendental vision. The act of critical opposition is lived, in one aspect, as the privileged possession of an exact image of the remotest past where the causal chain starts and, in the other, as a rapture that reaches the heights and allows one to contemplate and to judge history from God's point of view. To understand the chain of events, to explain evil by its genesis, to juxtapose to the lies of the present humanity the goodness of primitive man: these are all ways to keep one's distance—to see from afar, to see from on high—which condemn Jean-Jacques to singularity and solitude (or which allow him to take advantage of his singularity and solitude). So, he is not only the one who proclaims truth as opposed to general error, but in addition, in his person, he is veracity itself, the personified alternative to social evils. He is bound to coincide with his discourse and to develop, from his singular subjectivity, another order of things, another moral world, a world of innocence and virtue opposed to the ways of the corrupt world. As we will see, for whoever tries to live this vocation, it can only generate anguish.

I have called "criteriological" the doctrinal body constituted by the *Emile* and the *Contrat social*, and I even included there *La Nouvelle Héloïse*. These works must in fact be considered in their narrow relationship to the earlier accusatorial texts which denounce evil and demonstrate its causal mechanism. The major doctrinal texts complete and justify the accusation: their value must be understood in this complementary relationship.

Let us simplify: the *Emile* and the *Contrat social* provide the explanation of the positively valorized concepts (virtue, morals, patriotism) which had pre-

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viously been formulated, fleetingly and one by one, in the name of which and by virtue of which Rousseau had initially entered his accusation. Just as the attack on evil had been followed by a brilliant reconstruction of evil's probable genesis, its opposite had to develop fully in space and time. The simple idea of virtue had to lead to its elaboration in theory, to an entire history of education in virtue (the *Emile*). The idea of *civisme*, taken alone at first, had to lead to an exposition of the principles of the general will and civic obedience in a city where devotion to the mother country could give them meaning. It was not enough for the accusation to be sustained by the personal existence of the accuser, by his "reform," his "Roman tone,"[33] his choice of a simple life and of a craft to earn his bread. Rousseau's demand is broader: it contrasts to the accused world the image of a different world—an unaltered or a remodeled world—where a law reigns in whose name the present reality can be called corrupt. Not content with rejection of usurping authorities, he wanted to build the image of true sovereignty. As we have said before, the counterproposal of Rousseau is sociopolitical, not religious, even though in the city of the *Contrat* and in Emile's upbringing Rousseau wants to grant to the religious feeling a most important role, aimed at assuring the city's moral cohesion and the blossoming of individual conscience. Rousseau had the courage to give considerable breadth to a conception which is neither a utopia radically foreign to reality nor a compromise with the world as it is. The alternative universe whose model he presents obeys two imperatives in relation to contemporary historical and social reality: first, to differ completely from it, but second, to stay sufficiently close to contemporary reality to occupy a space seemingly so near that the reader, absent from the just city and gripped by virtuous remorse, will feel guilty because true life and happiness were perhaps within his reach and could have been reached at the price of a courageous conversion. Having first upset his reader, Rousseau makes him feel thoroughly guilty by showing him the life he could have had but did not choose. Should the reader take Jean-Jacques' side, he might experience an inner renewal. This is why the worlds created by Rousseau exert such an attraction: they appear to offer a better life (even on earth) for those who would have the audacity to reject convention and servitude. Contemporary experience teaches us that those who initially accept their guilt are prepared to listen to the catechisms proposed to them if, at the price of that new faith, they are able to leave fault behind and atone. This was the method of religious conversions; it is today that of political conversions. Rousseau is perhaps the prophet of transition from one sphere to the other, even though so many of his arguments are taken directly from Seneca and classical exhortation. Rousseau possessed the power to convert: in the *Emile*, the *Contrat social*, and the *Nouvelle Héloïse*, he showed the way back to the very principles, moral or political, whence a new existence could get its start and lead to eventual happiness. He thus gained rapidly a band of followers ready to follow this master of wisdom. To appreciate this, we have only to read the letters he received from numerous unknown correspondents who, for the most part, declared themselves ready to leave everything in order to live by his side; we have only to consider the many attempts to apply theory in practice, inspired first by *La Nouvelle Héloïse* and the *Emile*, then by the *Contrat social*. Rousseau shows us very clearly how the accusatorial word can develop into seductive appeal at the moment when the negative critique gives way to

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the positive image (though entirely imaginary) of a universe of goodness asserted as in the realm of the possible.

One example among many is offered by the preface of the *Emile*. There, Rousseau declares his opposition to the existing educational system. It is a radical opposition excluding all compromise. In his refusal, Rousseau initially associates himself with a general dissatisfaction: "There has been constant complaint about current practice."[34] But no one except Rousseau goes beyond expressing dissatisfaction. The sentence continues: "but never a plan for anything better . . ." If he is not alone in the accusation, Jean-Jacques is the exception in formulating an alternative theory of education. And he will be more conspicuous yet when he becomes the adversary of the purely critical attitude of all contemporary men of letters: "The literature and the science of our century seek much more to destroy than to build."[35] So it is by the double refusal of established education and of destructive criticism that Rousseau defines his own endeavor. We are not extrapolating excessively in the direction of Hegelian philosophy when we speak here of the negation of negation. What is important to note is the fact that this double negation places Rousseau in the position of the solitary thinker facing universal error. He affirmed it: his ideas are his only. He presents them as his own, but, unlike Montaigne, who did the same thing without seeking to convince others, Rousseau postulates universality and demands everyone's adherence even though he has retreated into particularity: "It is not other people's ideas of education I am presenting, but my own; it is a long-standing reproach that I see things differently from other people."[36] Firm in his principles, he refuses all compromise with accepted customs: "I am always admonished to suggest something feasible. What in fact is being said to me is that I should propose what is being done or at least combine something good with the existing evil. A proposal like this is really more chimerical than mine, for in this alliance the good gets corrupted and the bad is not cured. I would rather follow the established usage than to adopt a good one by halves; there would be less contradiction in man, for he cannot direct his efforts to two opposite ends at once. Fathers and mothers, what is feasible is what you are willing to do. Should I be held accountable for what you want?"[37] The negation's negation leads to an entirely original program, different in all aspects from established practice and formulated in the tone of an ultimatum. It will then be possible for Rousseau to build his educational plan through constant criticism of the existing system, contrasting it with the fictitious development of an imaginary pupil. And he will be able to produce a surprising effect of reality: the diversity of psychic functions taken into account and the multiplicity of evolutionary steps spaced between early childhood and adulthood confer on this ideal pupil a depth and a complexity which lend full credibility to his story. Here too, Rousseau displays an intuitive genius about the spiritual mutations which, over the course of life, result from the interaction of the laws of existence, the initiatives of the individual and the influences of the environment. Many causes come into play to determine a slow progression that would be harmed by acceleration. Emile now has the depth and the substance necessary to become the positive example which will be compared triumphantly to young men submitted to traditional education. Reread, for example, the passage in book 4 where Rousseau confronts "your pupil" with "mine". Rousseau succeeds in making plausible his pupil as a "model for comparison."[38] He gives him a reality which depreciates

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without possible recourse anything that does not resemble it. Emile's tutor, step by step, allows him freedom to develop in all circumstances according to his natural aptitudes. Thus, Emile exemplifies the reasons for rebellion against contemporary social practice and becomes the obvious model of a method which could make a new man by a rather simple recipe ("negative" education which leaves to the child the initiative with regard to the objects that surround him). But Rousseau carefully adds: "the ease of execution, greater or less, depends on a thousand circumstances which it is impossible to define except in a particular application of the method to such or such country, to such or such a condition."[39] Let us understand fully this important restriction: it allows the blame to be put on circumstances for the difficulty or the impossibility of practical application in such a way that the absolute value of the model will not suffer and its polemic function will not diminish. Even when it is inapplicable, Emile's upbringing is supposed to be most faithful to nature, and it should permit judgment on all other divergent upbringings. Rousseau would not concede that it could ever lose its value as a "regulative concept."

Similarly, this is the case with the *Contrat social:* he exhibits the criteriological model which permits him to judge and accuse existing societies, and he describes, at the same time, a structure workable under certain conditions. Rousseau explains this very clearly. In book 5 of the *Emile,* Rousseau gives a summary of his political theory: Emile is about to travel and he needs to have a clear knowledge of the norms in order to evaluate the realities he will be faced with. "Before observing, one needs to establish rules for one's observations: one needs a scale with which to compare one's measurements. That scale is our principles of political law. Our measurements are the political laws of each country."[40] But Rousseau insists on ascribing a practical importance to his work, at least in the case of small states: and he hopes it will exert a delaying influence: "He had worked for his country and for small states structured similarly. If his doctrine could be somewhat useful to others, it would be by changing the objects of their respect and by slowing the decadence which they accelerate by their false observations."[41]

The accuser can now declare unacceptable the political forms which do not correspond to the proposed model, while reiterating that the ideal could in certain cases—at some other time, somewhere else—coincide with reality. The picture of the just society will fortify the grievances aimed against the unjust society, if it is possible to prove that a just society could exist on rare occasions. The writer's refusal becomes even more vehement; the reader's feeling of guilt painfully deepens, for he learns that he could contribute himself, under the same circumstances and perhaps by his own will, to sustain or to restore a city of true citizens, a city where sovereignty would be the privilege of the whole society.

La Nouvelle Héloïse also unites a negation and an affirmation. It paints a marvelous picture of mountains, lakes, groves, and beautiful souls, in order to oppose it to the world of Paris. But his antagonistic function, in order to work fully, must soon be reversed into a positive seduction: the novel makes one feel fully happy only when one moves away from the big city.

How was this novel born? First Rousseau had to refuse Paris in order to live in the countryside at the Hermitage. Then, alone with himself, Rousseau had to discover emptiness and amorous discontent. *La Nouvelle Héloïse* is thus born

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from the union of accusatorial refusal and the effervescence of desire. This fictitious world *is not* that of the society of the rich and the great, but at the same time it is a world *which was not granted* to Jean-Jacques' loving heart: it is a chimerical land built by his imagination and his memory. Rousseau fills the vacuum; he sidetracks his regrets; he repairs the injustices of destiny. This novel is both the possible universe juxtaposed by Rousseau to the barrenness of Parisian salons, and the sentimental fable he invents in order to fill an inner want. Once more, a double negation is at work.

We will find this double negation in the book itself. Saint-Preux, arrived from Vevey to Paris, describes without any satisfaction the life of the city: his letters echo the accusation that is the basis of the entire work. As for Julie, apparently happy and reigning over a circle of beautiful souls, she feels an unexplainable lack—"the ennui of happiness": "the land of chimera is the only one in this world in which it is worth living, and such is the nothingness of human affairs that, outside of the Being sufficient unto himself, nothing is beautiful other than what is not."[42]

Identifying with his characters, Rousseau succeeds in endowing his refusals, his aspirations, and his unappeased desires with a quality of veracity which will find its echo in the reader's identification. Rousseau had shown them what they believed to be authentic passion, veracious language, and true happiness, and nothing seemed more desirable to them than leaving their universe of conventions and lies in order to live as did Saint-Preux and Julie. They could imagine themselves liberated from all hindrances at the cost of a change of habits and surroundings, a trip to enchanting shores. For the contrasting world was not too far away. One did not have to change continents; one had hardly to change countries, for regeneration could take place almost next door. The idyllic softness of the landscape of Clarens allowed the accuser to call himself citizen of a land both real (marked on the map of the West) and conceptual. His indictment was thus authorized and justified. In its love letters or its sublime reasoning, the strength of feeling imposed its law, the accuser presented the credentials of the other land, the foreign kingdom of which he was the ambassador. The Rousseauan fiction, from which the character of the wicked is absent, bears witness to the purity of the soul of its author. It carries an apologetic value and at the same time confirms the merits of the action undertaken against the corrupt world.

The alternative universe developed by Rousseau is that where virtuous endurance is shaped (the *Emile*); it is that of a community based on reciprocity of consciences (*Contrat social*); it is that of the transparency of hearts (*La Nouvelle Héloïse*). One can see what is important to the accuser: not only to legitimate his refusal of the world, but in addition to testify that his blows against the vices of the time were not motivated by hatred. Everything happens as if Rousseau wanted to put the accent on the qualities of softness, harmony, and transparency of his alternative universe in order that the violence of his accusatorial gesture be above suspicion.[43] To be resolutely beyond evil, one needs to have prevented evil from creeping into the denunciation itself of society's ills. Hypersensitive as he was, Rousseau feared that his dissenting attitude might be taken as selfish resentment. When, alone against all, one lodges a complaint against injustice and error, one can be accused of being moved by unjust hate, by unso-

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ciability, by desire to harm. If Rousseau admits (albeit with difficulty) to having known accesses of "bile" and "humor" or sometimes melancholia, he defends himself against the charge of being a misanthrope.[44] How did he come to feel that Diderot's famous words, "Only the wicked is alone,"[45] although casually inserted in a fictional dialogue, were directed against him? To him they were unbearable and deeply painful because they totally reversed the moral relationship in which he wanted to establish himself before the world: that of censor, solitary prophet, exempt from the sins he denounces, bearer of the just word. In Rousseau's time, these classic roles could only be imitated, assumed, without an institutional foundation. They were literary roles. For an ex-vagabond, the entry through the printed word, that is, through "verbal magic," into the functions of religious preacher, Roman censor, can only be accompanied by an inward guilt which will require constantly renewed assurance and confirmation. One should produce proofs and show that one really *is* someone who has the right to hold such discourses. "I always sustained the part badly," writes Rousseau in regard to the "cynical and sarcastic" tone he had adopted "out of shame" at the moment of his great reform.[46] The suspicion of charlatanism, hypocrisy, and trickery can always be raised—from within or without. This is the type of amenity that men of letters exchanged at that time. (Rousseau calls Tronchin a trickster; Voltaire, insulting Rousseau, calls him a "charlatan." Only Rameau's nephew, eschewing the pose of nobility, calls himself harshly madman and buffoon.) However, in his private life—concubinage with Thérèse, abandoned children—Rousseau knows that, despite his justifications, the being does not coincide with the appearance: he does not resemble the virtuous fathers of ancient Rome. And one knows that later on Rousseau will cease to claim virtue, which demands an effort he feels unable to make. It will be enough for him to claim pure and natural spontaneity, goodness, innocence, or in any case nonmalfeasance which can go along with weakness.[47]

Let us formulate a hypothesis. Rousseau, wanting above all to escape evil, can trade, without essential damage, the attitude of accuser for that of accused. The accusatorial attitude implies an expenditure of aggressive energy entailing the obligation to face a double exigency: the legitimacy of the accusation and purity of intentions. The accuser must necessarily place himself in an active position. He must exhibit his virile virtue not only by the courage of his refusal, but by the production, through the effort of reflection, of the images or the positive intellectual models that he adopts as alternatives. The work is considerable: to formulate principles, to deduce consequences, to go back to presocial man in order to establish the fundamental pact and, through a necessary line of arguments logically articulated, to build the other city (or in the case of *Emile*, the other man). This effort to structure in their theoretical links or their affective climate a mother country (Geneva), a place populated with beautiful souls (Clarens), a human model (Emile), a religious conviction (Profession de Foi du Vicaire Savoyard), Rousseau accomplished with a sense of duty, of fixing his ideas as he had prescribed for himself. But he stayed as a third party between these works and the hostile world, obliged to take upon himself the proof of the validity of his "sad and great system,"[48] obliged to endow it with enough attraction and veracity to make of it a universe competitive with the unsatisfactory world. At the height of his theoretical construction, he always felt that he was himself

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in question in the system he was developing. He had to vouch for it, and in return the system brought him a confirmation. A rapport of reciprocal affirmation was thus established, but once the system was considered complete, a retreat into the person, the subjective "source," was possible. It became permissible to give up the effort, the reflective activity.[49] It became possible to abandon the roles of tutor, legislator, moral guide, which had constituted so many variations of the paternal figure. And since the initial accusation led to putting the *I* of the accuser in a conspicuous position and since this *I* neither could nor wanted to leave the scene, the only thing left for him to do was to retreat into passive innocence: to abandon himself to nature's first movement, to live as an "automaton" in immediate spontaneity.[50] Relaxation, surrender were permitted. Instead of the system and the articulation of his distinct constituency, instead of the idealized laws of the city of the father, life in nature permitted the achievement, in all purity, of an ideal of fusion in which the return to the mother was so perfectly accomplished that Rousseau sometimes found himself feminized. His sense of persecution made necessary his escape, his search for shelter and asylum. It permitted him to enjoy this type of happiness, while by suffering from feelings of persecution he paid the required price. The benefit of the system was not annulled: a deserved rest could rightfully follow work. Rousseau would now be able to transfer into autobiography, into personal justification, the religious element that lead him to sacralize the city's image. Just as the earthly city in the system had taken the place of God's city, autojustification in the face of universal accusation was going to take the place of the process of Grace.[51]

The persecution that Rousseau feels building around himself is multiform. It is assuredly the expected retort, either open or covert, from those whose interests he has attacked and whose convictions he has shocked: "He undoubtedly expected a cruel revenge from all those whom truth offends. He knew that grandees, viziers, gentlemen of the robe, financiers, doctors, priests, philosophers, and all people who make society a real highway robbery, would never forgive him for having seen through them and showed them as they were . . . The harsh truths that he spoke, although he did so in general terms, were darts that make in the heart wounds that never heal."[52] But according to Rousseau himself, this counterstroke ought to have brought only measures, logically justified—"hatred" and "all kinds of persecutions."[53] However, Rousseau considers himself to be the victim of much worse treatment, the causes of which are to him unfathomable: "disgrace," "infamy," "defamation." The counterattack by the world, as he experiences it, not only makes him someone persecuted by public opinion and guilty of having challenged the institutions and their representatives; it also penetrates his moral self, the inner integrity which was the very basis for the merit of his accusation. It points to the evil inherent in the very source from which originates the just world he had imagined in order to contrast it to the corrupt one. The accusation, therefore, weighs on the original ground of the conscience, on the center where the "voice of conscience" is born. Since defamation, as he experiences it, touches not only his moral quality (he is called wicked) and his morals (he is called a poisoner, a satyr, a thief, a "*vérolé*"), it essentially touches upon his very identity. It questions the bond between his

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person and his writings; it unties the relation of reciprocal testimony through which the person and the work proved their goodness one by the other. Generalizing on the evil comments actually directed against him, Rousseau feels that he is robbed of his work by being taken for a plagiarist, or that anonymous books which are not his are imputed to him. In other words, Rousseau is convinced that the league of his persecutors denies him the very thing on which he wanted to build a new authority, superior to all accepted authorities—that is his loving heart, obedient to the primal movements of nature, his inner sentiment spontaneously enlightened by a reason attuned to the universal order. Now, the result of this defamation of which Rousseau reads the signs everywhere, is not, on his part, to battle against criticism. The authorities' surveillance prevents him from doing this, and he probably intends to fight only to affirm his true identity, to save himself from the emptiness in which he would be engulfed were the testimony of his work to be suppressed. Hence, he has to resume his writing in order to multiply the proofs of his innocence, to authenticate his writings and their salutary purpose. In short, the suspicion which he feels hanging over him compels him to work in order to regain the image of himself which has been stolen from him and disfigured. He will have to offer a new expression of his true self, by means of the autobiographical narration (*Confessions*), the dialogued apology (*Dialogues*), the dreaming improvisations (*Rêveries*). Thus, the accusation necessitates a defense, the resources of which derive from the narcissistic relationship to the self and which will justify its pleasures.

From then on, he is able to look at his role of accuser as a finished phase of his existence. He no longer has to prove to the world that the violence of his word is just. "Innocent and persecuted," he himself endures an unjust violence. He deals solely with himself, is solely concerned with himself, waiting for God's judgment and that of posterity.

He remains alone, changed into the persecuted, against them all, the accusers. The initial situation has been reversed. The antinomy is not abolished. The accusation simply comes from the other side. The paranoid ideas which insistently haunt many of Rousseau's late pages show, in a writer who has given the first sign of a certain type of accusatory thought in Europe, how far that thought can reach. To accuse universal evil, and exempt oneself from it, can only lead to one of the two following consequences. Either one feels persecuted in return by the "wicked," resigning oneself to that and seeking in intimate transparency the consolation from all injustices—this is the passive, masochistic solution, to which Rousseau's preference tends to direct itself. Or one responds through violence, engaging in the fight against the evil world in the name of justice and innocence, whose demands one believes oneself alone to know—this is the aggressive, sadistic, terrorist solution. In both cases, the accuser (or the group of accusers) and the accused (or the group of attacked) arrogate to themselves a privileged role: they are in possession of the light and the transparency, whereas everything around them remains in darkness. The choice of the paradoxical antinomic rapport with reality determines in advance the psychopathic radicalization of the relationship with the rest of mankind. The revolutionary period, and then modern history, have only given to the consequences already developed in Rousseau's destiny the opportunity to become a reality through

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large-scale events. (I would like to add the following to avoid being considered as one of those who, without fearing anachronism, claim that the *Contrat social* is a totalitarian work: this view is neither prefigured nor prepared in Rousseau's doctrine. It is to be read in his attitude.)

The reverie, in which Rousseau finally takes refuge, no longer has the mission of providing a comparative world which could be of value to all men and could replace the effective order or disorder of human relationships. The world of reverie now has a substitutive value for Jean-Jacques alone; it replaces all the joys of trust and communication denied to him. The man who had raised himself to God, as we have seen, in order to condemn mankind will rekindle the same enthusiasm, the same high-soaring élan toward the divine, but with a different aim: to escape the suit which mankind unfairly is bringing against him. The imaginary response first elaborated against the world finally becomes the compensation which allows the persecuted to find refuge outside the world, far from his persecutors' reach.

Is it necessary to insist here on the contemporary phenomena which seem closely copied on the model offered by Rousseau's experience? The protest addressed against a world conceived as unjust is reversed into a passionate attention to all that remains for the individual when the world massively plots against him. It is because Rousseau first wrote his two accusatory *Discours* and the *Contrat social* that he could become the author of the fifth *Rêverie*, dedicated to the memories of his ecstasies on the shores of the lake of Bienne. The idea of rejection is the common term: it can be conjugated actively or passively. The City of the *Contrat* is the theoretical image necessary to the one who rejects the actual society in the name of another political organization. His turning toward nature's scenery, his fusion with nature, his listening to the pure "feeling of existence" are the only goodness remaining to the one who has been rejected by the society of men; the individual becomes a universe unto himself, he discovers the unknown riches of his body, of his memory, of his fantasies. *Accuser*, rejecting injustice and suspicious authorities, Rousseau is the first to fill with a sacred fascination the theoretical model of a society or of an education able to repair harm done. *Accused*, seeking within himself justification and compensation, he is again the first to show the full range of autobiography, in which a life's truth is expressed in the "chain of one's secret feelings."[54] If Rousseau is still alive for us, it is because, through accusation and rejection conjugated actively and passively, he has formulated two important modern myths which have retained all their power: the myth of a social universe in which man, depending solely on himself, encounters his fellow-men in a perfect transparency of hearts, and the myth of an individual experience so rich that it can replace all other possessions.

Thus, Rousseau's ideas and Rousseau's destiny still remain provocative. We feel that we can test on him—notwithstanding the two centuries that have elapsed—the crucial ethical problems of modern man. Dissent, individualism, cravings for a better social organization, which, if realized, would subordinate the individual to the community—these are some of the puzzling aspects which nowadays attract endless commentaries on Rousseau. I see no predictable end, for instance, to the discussion on the narrow relationship between guilt and the two mythical images of the fullness of the social body and the fullness of individual existence. As with projective psychological tests, the way our time inter-

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prets Rousseau could help a judicious observer to define today's major intellectual issues.

Translated by Jacqueline Brovender

References

[1]Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Les Confessions*, in *Oeuvres complètes de Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, ed. Bernard Gagnebin and Marcel Raymond, 4 vols. (Paris: Gallimard, 1959–1969, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade) vol. 1, p. 495. This expression is to be found in book 10, where Rousseau tells of his writing of the *Lettre à d'Alembert sur les Spectacles*, which marks a change of tone: "Until then, indignant virtue took the place of inspiration." A few months before his illumination on the road to Vincennes in early 1749, Rousseau writes to Madame de Warens and tells her of his mood when writing his articles on music, primarily directed against Rameau, for the *Encyclopédie*: "I defend myself against the people who have wronged me; bile gives me strength, and even wit and science: 'Anger is enough and itself an inspiration.' " This verse is from Boileau, who remembered Juvénal's famous verse: *facit indignatio versum*. (Note that subsequent citations of works of Rousseau are references to the Pléiade edition.)

[2]Ibid., p. 351. Elsewhere, Rousseau mentions six years.

[3]Ibid., p. 416.

[4]Ibid., p. 417.

[5]Ibid., p. 416.

[6]Ibid., p. 417 [translation taken from J. M. Cohen, *The Confessions of Jean-Jacques Rousseau* (Baltimore, Penguin Classics, 1954), p. 388—J.B.].

[7]Diderot, *Oeuvres esthétiques* (Paris: Garnier, 1959), p. 695.

[8]*Les Confessions*, pp. 495–496.

[9]*Discours*, vol. 3, p. 29.

[10]Cf. Pierre-Maurice Masson, *La religion de Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, vol. 1 (Paris, 1916), p. 259 and following, about the rebuttals elicited by Voltaire's *Le Mondain*, which praised luxury and refined life.

[11]*Correspondance complète de Rousseau*, ed. R. A. Leigh, vol. 3, p. 22 (anonymous letter to Jacob Vernes).

[12]Cited by Etienne Dumont. Cf. Louis-J. Courtois, "Rousseau jugé par Etienne Dumont. Pages oubliées et pages inédites," *Annales J.-J. Rousseau*, 22:154–203.

[13]*Confessions*, vol. 1, pp. 25–26 [Cohen, pp. 34–35].

[14]*Discours*, p. 30 [translation taken from R. D. Masters, *The First and Second Discourses* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1964), p. 64—J.B.].

[15]Pascal, *Pensées*, ed. Philippe Sellier (Paris, 1976), p. 46.

[16]Malebranche, *Traité de morale* (Paris: Vrin, 1966), p. 35.

[17]Fénelon, *Oeuvres complètes*, vol. 6 (Paris, 1850), p. 56.

[18]Ibid., p. 57.

[19]Massillon, *Oeuvres*, vol. 1 (Paris, 1877), p. 670.

[20]*Discours*, vol. 1, p. 26.

[21]*Discours*, vol. 3, p. 45.

[22]In *Jean-Jacques Rousseau: La Transparence et l'obstacle*, new ed. (Paris, 1976). This ideal is to be found everywhere in Rousseau. It is particularly obvious in the *Lettre à d'Alembert sur les Spectacles*, where Rousseau contrasts the traditional theater with the public festivals where civic life celebrates its own apotheosis. As in the case of his accusation of "arts and sciences," Rousseau renews against the theater an indictment made previously by theologians, but offers a political alternative. See Jonas A. Barish, "The Antitheatricalism of Jean-Jacques Rousseau," *Stanford French Review*, I, 2 (Fall, 1977): 167–190.

[23]The idea of compensation is one of the constant themes of the *Rêveries*, Rousseau's last work.

[24]Ernst Cassirer, *Das Problem Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, Archiv fur Geschichte der Philosophie, vol. 41 (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1970), pp. 29–37.

[25]This bias which is today that of the accusatorial thought "of the left" is the opposite of the misuse by the conservative thought of the notion of human nature. It calls upon the permanent nature of things, the constant limits of human nature in order to justify relations of authority historically determined and essentially modifiable. It is illusory and misleading to try to protect some contingent social structures in the name of an eternal human nature. But it is no less deceitful to feed the grievances against the existing social rule by a metaphysical claim which no change of social rule could satisfy. In both cases, one rightfully can see an "ideology" at work, that is a system of arguments intended to protect the validity of an irrational interest.

[26]Rousseau draws up the list in the beginning of the third part of the *Dialogues*, vol. 1, pp. 917–923.

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[27]*Discours*, vol. 3, pp. 14–15.

[28]Ibid., p. 133.

[29]Ibid., p. 164.

[30]This verse of Ovid (*Tristia*, X, 37) is cited in a letter of his youth (*Correspondance complète*, ed. R. A. Leigh, vol. 1, p. 139). Rousseau will use it as epigraph for the *Muse allobroge*, the first *Discours* and the *Dialogues*. It must be compared with the motto which Rousseau will adopt later: *vitam impendere vero*.

[31]*Les Confessions*, p. 351.

[32]Ibid., pp. 388–389 [Cohen, p. 362].

[33]Ibid., p. 376.

[34]*Émile*, vol. 4, p. 241.

[35]Ibid.

[36]Ibid., p. 242.

[37]Ibid., p. 243.

[38]The confrontation of the two pupils is developed in book 4 of the *Émile*, pp. 512–515. The expression "exhibit of comparison" is used by Rousseau in order to define his own portrait as he plans to write it. *Ébauches des Confessions*, p. 1149.

[39]*Émile*, p. 243.

[40]Ibid., p. 837.

[41]*Lettre à Christophe de Beaumont*, vol. 1, p. 935.

[42]*La Nouvelle Héloïse*, vol. 2, p. 693.

[43]In his remarks about Rousseau's style, Etienne Dumont underlines the fact that, unlike Fénelon, always unvaryingly "sweet," or La Bruyère, "nearly always bitter," Rousseau knows how to contrast styles and develop a contrast of "severity and softness." To go one step farther, one can add that Rousseau needed to be gentle in order to make the strength of his accusatorial refusals believed: the moments of gentleness reveal that, at their *source*, Jean-Jacques' feelings are pure and loving. Louis-J. Courtois, "Rousseau jugé par Etienne Dumont. Pages oubliées et pages inédites," *Annales J.-J. Rousseau*, 22:154–203.

[44]See Rousseau, *Confessions*, p. 369, *Dialogues*, p. 788, *Lettres à Malesherbes*, p. 1131, for example.

[45]*Confessions*, p. 455, and *Dialogues*, p. 789.

[46]*Confessions*, p. 369.

[47]*Dialogues*, p. 824.

[48]*Préface d'une seconde lettre à Bordes*, vol. 3, p. 105.

[49]Cf. "Jean-Jacques Rousseau et le péril de la réflexion," in Jean Starobinski, *L'oeil vivant* (Paris, 1961), pp. 91–188.

[50]The expression appears several times in the second *Dialogue*.

[51]Cf. Hans Robert Jauss, "Religiöser Ursprung und ästhetische Emanzipation der Individualität," in *Ästhetische Erfahrung und literarische Hermeneutik*, vol. 1 (Munich, 1977), pp. 200–211.

[52]Rousseau, *Dialogues*, pp. 926–927.

[53]Ibid., p. 926.

[54]*Ébauches des Confessions*, vol. 1, p. 1149.

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LIONEL GOSSMAN

The Innocent Art of Confession and Reverie

AUTOBIOGRAPHY SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN, in the eighteenth century, one of those subliterary, uninstitutionalized genres, like the letter or the travel journal, by means of which writers hoped to renew the masks of literature. Like other subliterary genres, moreover, it gives the appearance of being free, untrammeled by the rules of art, and unmediated by established literary codes. Writing in 1821, Edgar Quinet conveys something of the spirit in which Rousseau's *Confessions* were read by contemporaries, and indeed, are still read by the vast majority of readers. Above all, he says, he enjoyed them because they were not a *book:* "I am now re-reading the Confessions of Jean-Jacques before going to bed . . . I find there is a language and a pleasure for every state of the soul in these memoirs. This is no author speaking, it seems as though absolutely anybody would describe his happiness and his sorrow in this way."[1] "Ce n'est pas un auteur qui parle"—the words are almost identical with those used by Marivaux in one of the essays in his *Spectateur français* of about a century earlier. Indeed, Marivaux was one of those who, in the early part of the eighteenth century, had most provocatively questioned the existing literary institutions. As a novelist he had rejected both the noble romances of the school of Scudéry and Gomberville and their acceptable low life counterparts, the *romans comiques.* Rejecting the alternative of noble or base, and emphasizing the middling ("*médiocre*") character of his style and subject matter, he sought to renew the novel by exploiting the mask of autobiographical writing. *La Vie de Marianne*, told in the first person, is ostensibly the autobiography of the heroine. Moreover, the term used by Quinet to describe the *Confessions—Mémoires*—was one that even by the time Rousseau was writing had already been appropriated by writers of fiction, precisely because it signaled to the reader the writer's rejection of the conventions of romance. The designation *Mémoires* was supposed to signal something uncomposed—a true account, not a fiction, a historical testimony, rather than a work of literature and imagination. It was intended to indicate that the text was rooted in experience, in the events of the moment, and that its order was dictated by the vagaries of memory or, directly, by events themselves, as Diderot's narrator in *Jacques le fataliste* would have had the reader believe his narrative was, rather than by the model of other stories. Not surprisingly, Rousseau sometimes referred to his own autobiographical text as "ces Mémoires," as did friends like Moultou and readers such as Turgot.[2] Indeed, the choice of the title

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Confessions rather than *Mémoire* or *Mémoires*—a choice that must have been made very early, since it figures in the title of the Neuchâtel manuscript, which was copied in the mid-1760s—was probably intended, among other things, to reinforce the nonliterary character of the enterprise even more effectively than *Mémoires de ma vie* might have done.[3]

In Rousseau's time the title *Confession* usually indicated a repentent criminal's narrative of his crime.[4] In the plural, *Confessions* would invite comparison with the *Confessions* of St. Augustine, with Duclos' *Confessions du Comte de* *** (1741), and with a number of narratives in the manner of the latter. As it happens, Rousseau mentions having been given Duclos' book by Mademoiselle de Broglie "pour guider mon inexpérience," and to serve him as a "mentor" in his pursuit of worldly success. He tells of having kept this copy for twenty years, and of having, in a strangely symmetrical gesture, entrusted to its author, "le seul ami vrai que j'aye eu parmi les gens de lettres," a manuscript of his own *Confessions*.[5] In fact, Duclos' *Confessions du Comte de* ***, though it was widely believed at the time to be autobiographical, was in large measure a collection of portraits and characters. It was with Augustine's *Confessions*, frequently republished in a variety of translations throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, that Rousseau's text most clearly asked to be compared, even as it laid claim to uniqueness. There are indeed many points of comparison. Rousseau's projection of himself in the *Confessions* may well owe something to the model provided by St. Augustine. Certain episodes in the later *Confessions*, which were to reappear with notable regularity throughout Romantic confessional literature, are reminiscent of similar episodes in the earlier ones. Above all, both *Confessions* are conversion stories, involving a repudiation of worldly signs and pleasure, of art and literature; both offer themselves therefore not as art, but as inmost truth. The episode in Augustine's narrative that was most often selected for pictorial representation, in paintings and engravings as well as in book illustrations, was that of the revelation in the garden: the *tolle, lege* episode at the end of book 8, which marks the substitution of the book of truth for the books of illusion.[6] In general, eighteenth-century readers thought of St. Augustine as a severe critic of literature, art, and science, and of his *Confessions* as an authentic account of a man's life, written for the moral edification of readers, rather than as a work of literary art. It was thus alongside a body of writings that seemed untainted by literature and art and unattached to any established poetic genre or rhetorical tradition that Rousseau's *Confessions*, by their very title, asked to be placed. In addition, the term *Confessions*, as distinct from *Mémoires*, directed attention to the private personality, the inner life and time of the individual as opposed to the public events, the public personalities, and the external chronology and history, to which the authors of memoirs—themselves usually noblemen, engaged in the conduct of public affairs—bore witness. There is some evidence that in the eighteenth century Augustine's *Confessions* were themselves beginning to be perceived in this light, the attention of readers being captured, above all, by the personal, individual aspect of the narrative.[7]

Many who found Rousseau's *Confessions* shocking were in fact registering their disapproval of the author's rejection of the neoclassical discrimination of noble and base, high and low, public and private, tragic and comic. Rousseau's candor about the details of his sexual life, for instance, was not in itself shock-

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ing; what was, was the seriousness with which he treated them and asked the reader to treat them, for in neoclassical aesthetics only passion was noble and serious, and what immediately concerned the body—always a metaphor of the common people—belonged properly to comedy or burlesque. In the same way the exposure of character flaws was always to be general; to particularize was ignoble. None of the "Confessions" which preceded Rousseau's infringed this rule. Duclos' *Confessions* were peopled by prudes, financiers, and magistrates, and the hero himself presented himself as a typical man about town. Initials were used in place of names in fictional confessions (as in Duclos' work or in *Les Confessions de la Baronne de *** rédigées par N. Le C. D. **** published in Amsterdam in 1743) in order to give an air of individuality and historical authenticity; at the same time, however, withholding the name signified the author's and the reader's acceptance of the classical conventions of anonymity and propriety. In the end, inevitably, this sign of authenticity became in its turn a sign of fictionality, and Rousseau's naming of names and detailing of circumstances from the historical world in place of either initials or recognizably fictional names (such as Laclos' Valmont or Rosemonde) effectively marked his repudiation of the conventions that his contemporaries still generally accepted.[8] On one hand, therefore, the title *Confessions* signaled to the reader that he should not expect the text to conform to the conventions of familiar types of narrative; on the other hand, the use of historical names and circumstances signaled that he should not expect it to conform to the pattern of those fictional confessions which were already beginning to establish themselves as yet another fictional genre. "Je forme une entreprise," the author claimed in his first sentence, "qui n'eut jamais d'exemple."

Rousseau's flouting of established conventions was not in the first instance aimed at establishing his narrative as historically true, rather than imaginary. The "truth" of the narrative, its freedom from narrative convention, was only the means by which the reader was to be shaken out of his routines of reading and led to lay himself open to the text and to attend to it sympathetically and without prejudice. In the long run, the degree of historical truth or fiction in the text was irrelevant, as Rousseau himself pointed out on several occasions. What mattered was that the reader was to read it in a new way.

Literary scholars interested in autobiography have devoted a good deal of attention to the matter of discriminating between autobiography and fictional writing. To Philippe Lejeune no difference can be established on the basis of the texts themselves. The difference must be referred to circumstances external to the texts and to the pact which is established with the reader and which guides his reading of the work.[9] Francis Hart distinguishes between autobiography and fiction on the basis of the object specific to the reading of each. The reader of an autobiography, according to Hart, "seeks an imaginative comprehension of another historical identity," whereas the reader of fiction "seeks an imaginative grasp of another's meaning."[10] This distinction does seem to account for readers' attitudes and expectations, but clearly provides no objective criteria of discrimination. It is the reader, in sum, who determines the character of the text. *Adolphe* and the *Cahier rouge* are both, depending on the reader's project in reading, equally autobiographies and fictions. Whatever its foundation, the im-

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portance of the distinction between autobiography and fiction seems to me to lie in the possibility, which autobiography at certain times affords, of avoiding fictional routines and renewing reader responses. Discontinuities, *invraisemblances*, improprieties, which the reader might have found unacceptable in a fiction, may be allowed to pass in an historical or autobiographical discourse, and a reading which in one sense is limited by curiosity about the identity of a narrator hero may in other respects be singularly open, imaginative, and attentive to what the text only half reveals or even attempts to conceal.[11]

Autobiography thus seems to me to take its place in the context of modern literature's constantly renewed repudiation of literature. One of its outstanding characteristics is in fact its rejection of the most obvious signs of art. The well-ordered pattern of fictional narrative, the Aristotelian *mythos*, is replaced in autobiography by a much more loosely organized one, subject to the vagaries of fortune and memory. Autobiography can thus give the impression of being uncomposed. Above all, the identifying characteristic of autobiography as compared with fiction—the filling up of the "shifter" *I*—is an erasure of one of the essential signs of art. The *I* of the narrator which the fictional writer leaves as a mask is assumed or filled up in autobiography, as in historiography, by the historical author and is given as identical with him. In other words, the situation which the historian or autobiographer seeks to create or simulate is a nonesthetic one, a situation of everyday communication in which the speaker naturally fills the grammatical shifter *I*.[12] Autobiography, in sum, suppresses or erases the preeminent sign of art or literature, the mask of the narrator. There is no need to belabor the point that this erasure is itself an artistic strategy—one much favored by the eighteenth century—and not an escape from the condition of art. A strikingly parallel strategy is found in the eighteenth-century theater. The signs of the actor—conventional costume, conventional declamation, and conventional gesture—were gradually erased and "natural" posture, declamation, and gesture substituted. As autobiography eliminates the essential sign of fictionality by eliminating the mask of the narrator, the naturalist theater of the eighteenth century attempted to eliminate the sign of art by eliminating the mask of the actor.

The repudiation of art and literature is in the first instance a liberating gesture. "Des histoires, des vies, des portraits, des caracteres!" Rousseau exclaims disdainfully. "Qu'est-ce que tout cela? Des romans ingénieux bâtis sur quelques actes extérieurs." His own discourse will be unique, he claims, unheard of, shockingly unconventional: "Je serai vrai; je le serai sans réserve; je dirai tout; le bien, le mal, tout enfin . . ."—"I shall be truthful; I shall be so without reservation; I shall tell all; the good, the bad, everything . . . I know there are harsh men who will again treat the most painful and humiliating avowals as shameless impudence; but I have either to make those avowals or to disguise myself; for if I keep silent about one thing, I shall not be known in any; everything in my character is indivisible and the bizarre and singular assemblage can be discovered only if all the circumstances of my life are known."[13]

Yet the appeal to truth can easily function also as a new limit, a new censorship, permitting some things to be said, and disallowing others. The truth as an opening to the unknown and the unsaid may be frightening, disturbing, but as

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limit it is reassuring, and the autobiographer's protestations of respect for it, as well as of his interest in utility, honesty, and the like, were doubtless intended to convince readers that they need not be fearful of placing themselves in the hands of the writer, since the latter promised not to abuse his power, but on the contrary, to provide knowledge useful and appropriate to everyday life in the world. Above all, the writer of autobiography, having released the immoral and antisocial pleasures of egotism and narcissism, in himself and in his reader, seems to have felt the need to emphasize the morality and the social usefulness of his project. Rousseau no sooner proclaims the uniqueness of his enterprise, his rejection of all previous models, his determination to tell all, however disturbing that may be, than he immediately reassures the reader that there will be no infringement of the principle of social utility. In the Neuchâtel manuscript, the *Confessions* are first presented as an audacious, courageous work ("Je ne connais jusqu'ici nul autre homme qui ait osé faire ce que je me propose"),[14] a dangerous one even, since it accepts no previously established norm. But the author soon promises that "si je remplis bien mes engagements j'aurai fait une chose unique et utile."[15] The shocking egoism of the opening paragraphs is smoothed over by reassuring references to the writer as an impartial chronicler of his age, well placed by his obscurity and simplicity to unmask its vices, a new Tacitus.[16] The unconventional project seeks after all the security of a model and a classification. In the foreword to the Geneva manuscript the writer likewise seeks the reader's approbation of a work that will be "unique et utile" since, though it appears to focus on the individual, its ultimate aim is to contribute to the creation of a new general science of man.[17] The indecorous attention to the particular is justified in the end by its value in promoting knowledge of the universal. The analogy with contemporary explanations of individual evils in terms of their contribution to the general good is striking. In both cases the particular is justified only by the general. In both cases the primacy of the universal over the particular is accepted, in principle at least. The author of the *Confessions* again bows to contemporary convention when he reassures the reader of his discretion as far as individuals are concerned—a major source of anxiety on the part of his erstwhile friends and associates—and undertakes to publish "ces mémoires" only after the facts they contain have become a matter of general indifference. The attempt to win the reader's good will culminates in a surprising *excusatio propter infirmitatem*, in which the writer disculpates the reader in case the latter should find the narrative uninteresting and takes the blame for failure on himself and the deficiencies of his art.[18]

Subsequent autobiographers, all of whom, whatever their disclaimers, inevitably work in the tradition of Rousseau, make similar concessions. Henry Adams conceived of his autobiography as a pedagogical text and sees himself as a "mannequin" or a model. The aim of his autobiography should be to show the reader "what part of his education has turned out to be useful, and what not."[19] Similarly Edgar Quinet declared in his *Histoire de mes idées* that "My aim was to tell in the guise of an individual history, the moral history of the generation to which I belong."[20] Quinet is unusually candid about the source of his anxiety. Like Rousseau he has no sooner demanded the right to release the voice of desire in his text and in the reader than he is frightened by the disturbance his action

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may produce. "Une crainte m'a longtemps arrêté, celle du reproche banal d'amour-propre à quiconque parle de soi." In the end, for him as for Rousseau, truth and science are invoked to justify a move that was first impelled by desire.

> I was able to move on, only by putting my conscience in order on this point. Here is one of the considerations that were most helpful to me. Every day we analyze the early development of the most minute creatures, an insect, an ant, a mite. Don't we try to discover how they evolved, under what creative impulse their dull members began to develop? How their instincts arose? Why should we not do for ourselves, without undue immodesty, what we do for the lowliest worm?
>
> What pride, indeed, in looking for oneself so close to the earth—and not, in order to publish one's own apology, but in order to understand one's existence, to discover one's imperceptible beginnings, and lay bare one's heart and one's mind!
>
> I wish every man who has written for the public would undertake such an investigation of himself. Of all his works, the one produced by this study would, I am sure, be the most useful to others. One can imagine the importance for education of having a number of such simple narratives, in which the writer would tell sincerely and, if possible, ingenuously how he perceived the world in the paradisiac time of his early childhood (and every man has had his own), which aspects of creation were first apprehended by him, why an insignificant cause had major consequences, for him, how human history was reflected and embraced in his worm's eye view. This may be the only way we can hope to rise later to conclusions that will be neither fanciful nor systematic. For who will tell us what objects, men, nature, life meant to us originally, if we will not speak up ourselves?[21]

Quinet's fear that it will be impossible to contain the desire which the autobiographical enterprise has released, unless a new system of constraints (those of truth) is substituted for the system of constraints that has been abandoned (those of convention) inspired a singularly vehement attack on Rousseau, as the evil genius who opened the Pandora's box of autobiography, and in particular on Rousseau's defense of fiction, in the Fourth Promenade, as an innocent pastime that, being neither truth nor falsehood, escapes moral stricture.

> What rule shall guide my recollections? J. J. Rousseau's reply to a similar question was a sad revelation to me. I was astounded to find him using his genius to determine the number of cases in his narrative in which he was justified in disguising the truth. And the cases where he allows such disguises are so numerous that one hardly knows what room is left for reality. He allows that it is possible, without lying, to present as true that which is not in the following cases:
>
> to embroider the circumstances;
> to exaggerate them, magnify them, accentuate them;
> to fill the lacunae of memory with invented facts;
> to decorate the truth;
> to tell things that have been forgotten, as it seems they ought to have been.
>
> The reasons he gives for overcoming his last scruples are: the "pleasure of writing," "the delirium of imagination," or what could more exactly be called the need to produce an effect. As for the theory supporting these reasons, it comes down to the argument that there are two kinds of truths, useful ones and indifferent ones.
>
> . . . Disguising the latter is not falsehood but fiction, whence the ability to remain true while uttering a pile of inventions and giving them out as realities.

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> Where do we stop in this terrifying permission he gives us to substitute the false for the true? . . . Shall I make use of the permission to mingle the true and the false, to the point where there is no longer either truth or falsehood? Should I be authorized by this great example to invent details, make additions, embroider circumstances? I shall do none of that, because this mingling of things disconcerts me and paralyzes me in advance. I can hardly see how the slightest happiness can be got from it.
>
> I was drawn to the things you told me when you presented them as true. Since I found out that some of them are invented, I am constantly striving to distinguish the true from the false without ever being able to find the limit or boundary separating the one from the other. I am constantly afraid of being duped. I feel, indeed, that I must be, inevitably. Thus I am deprived of all my feelings of security, and of a good half of my pleasure . . .
>
> When you write a novel and offer it to me as such, I read it in the spirit in which you conceived it. What lies before me is a fiction, I know it, and can only be duped by it if I so will; but it is not so when you write the story of your life; if you intermingle invented facts which you offer to me as true, you do me a real harm. I follow you trustingly, with eyes closed, and you abuse this trust to deceive me. You blind my intelligence, you debase it by subjecting it to things whose falsehood I have no means of discerning. You subject me to yourself. I become your plaything. You distort my mind, my imagination, my reason. This is the greatest wrong you could do me. The only dangerous books for me are those in which what is not real is presented to me as if it were.[22]

Quinet's terror at the liberation of desire (fiction) in autobiography, his desperate concern to contain it, by imposing strict criteria of truth and falsehood on autobiographical discourse, emerges vividly from the unusually charged language of this passage ("Où s'arrêter," "permission effrayante," "Userai-je de la permission," "M'autoriserai-je," "ce mélange me déconcerte et me glace," "je m'occupe de discerner le vrai du faux sans pouvoir trouver la limite de l'un et de l'autre," "Je crains d'être dupe," "Cela m'ôte toute sécurité," etc.).

The autobiographical project is thus an ambiguous one. On the one hand it throws over established constraints; on the other it seeks to contain itself by draping itself in a realist or scientific cloak. Most of the specific and explicit intentions of autobiography, one suspects, stem from similar constraining and limiting strategies. Francis Hart outlines three "formal principles" of autobiography—confession ("personal history that seems to communicate or express the essential nature, the truth, of the self"), apology ("personal history that seeks to demonstrate or realize the integrity of the self"), and memoir ("personal history that seeks to articulate or repossess the historicity of the self"). Confession, he considers, "is ontological; apology ethical; memoir historical or cultural."[23] Hart wisely emphasizes that his principles are not intended to be exclusive of each other, but are all usually active together in varying degrees in any given work of autobiography. It is indeed possible to go through the *Confessions*, or any other autobiographical work, and find passages that are predominantly, even explicitly and programmatically, confessional, others that are predominantly apologetic, others again that are primarily commemorative. Often the confessional and the commemorative overlap, especially in the common case of autobiographies written in exile (Rousseau, Quinet, Herzen), where the recuperation or reappropriation of the past from which one has been separated may be seen to be part of a larger confessional enterprise. Most studies of autobiogra-

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phy do in fact emphasize its unifying function. Where there is an apparent discontinuity, a meaningful continuity must be shown. The inspiration of autobiographical writing in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries at any rate, would thus appear to correspond quite closely to the inspiration of history writing. In both cases the text founds an identity, a unity, which is not immediately apparent.[24]

Yet it is hard to believe that the impulse to write autobiography is totally accounted for by such rational ends as establishing an identity, restoring a reputation, or providing a historical and cultural testimony. Indeed, one might be tempted to speculate that the writer's efforts to structure and interpret his own discourse are in some measure a posteriori—attempts to limit or control meaning by guiding and orienting the reader's reading. Perhaps in autobiography, as in many other forms of imaginative writing, there are two impulses. One is to release a discourse that has been suppressed, to permit what could not be said, was not said, and is indeed unsayable—the thing that is at the heart of the writer's activity as a writer—to be said, or rather to be approximated. The other impulse is to imprison it again, to disguise it, to keep it at arm's length, by means of substitutions and displacements. Rousseau's efforts to get the reader to read him in a certain way, his repeated attempts to impose a pattern of paradise and fall on his narrative remain curiously superficial, inoperative. The reader may well suspect that this is not what the *Confessions* are really saying.

Starobinski once described Rousseau's writing career as a persistent struggle to release a discourse which was, as it were, imprisoned within him, and to which none of the existing forms of writing was adequate. The first writings, halting imitations of Boileau or Marivaux, are indeed clumsy and heavy handed, and Rousseau himself considered that his career as a writer began only with the First Discourse. In his own account of the illumination that occurred on that famous journey to Vincennes to visit Diderot, he tries to convey the impression of a breakthrough, a liberation, an overwhelming release of libidinal energy:

> If ever anything resembled a sudden inspiration, it was the movement that occurred within me on reading [the question of the Académie de Dijon], I suddenly felt my mind dazzled as by a thousand lights, crowds of vivid ideas rushed into it all at once with such force and in such confusion that I was thrown into a state of inexpressible disturbance; my head felt suddenly dizzy, as if I were drunk. I was overcome by a violent attack of palpitation, my chest felt tight; breathless and unable to walk I collapsed on the ground under one of the trees lining the avenue, and I spent a half hour there in such a state of agitation that when I got up, I noticed that the whole front of my waistcoat was wet with tears I had no recollection of having shed.

Yet the discourse that emerged from that shattering experience, he complained, in no way measured up to it:

> All I was able to retain of those multitudes of great truths by which, in the space of a quarter of an hour, I was illuminated under that tree, has been scattered in much weakened form throughout my three principal writings—that is to say that first discourse, the one on inequality and the treatise on education . . . All the rest has been lost.[25]

After the prize essay, the rhetorical set piece, Rousseau turned to the novel, after the novel to narrative autobiography, after that to the still more free form

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of the *Rêveries*, as though driven by the need to liberate his language. Rousseau himself testifies in several places to the great difficulty he experienced as a writer, and to the double movement—of revelation and concealment, inscription and erasure, pursuit and flight—that marked the practice of writing for him.

> My ideas come together in my head only with the utmost difficulty. They move around in it silently, ferment, then disturb me, arouse me, give me palpitations, and in the midst of all this excitement I can see nothing clearly; I am unable to write a single word, I have to wait. Imperceptibly, the tumult subsides, the chaos clears; everything falls into place, but slowly and only after a long period of confusion and perturbation . . .
>
> This is the source of the extreme difficulty I experience in writing. My manuscripts—scratched out, blotted, criss-crossed, undecipherable—attest to the pain they have cost me. Not one of them but had to be transcribed four or five times before being handed to the printer. I have never been able to do anything sitting at my table, pen in hand before the paper. It is when out walking in the midst of the rocks and the woods, or when in bed at night, unable to sleep, that I do my writing in my head—with all the laboriousness you can imagine, especially as I am completely without verbal memory and have never in my life been able to learn as much as six lines by heart. Some of my periods have been turned and turned over in the course of five or six nights before reaching the stage where they could be committed to paper.[26]

In important respects, Rousseau's last autobiographical work, the *Rêveries du promeneur solitaire*, carries the enterprise of the *Confessions* significantly forward. Once again the title itself is a signal to the reader. The plural "Confessions" had already indicated an element of discontinuity, a juxtaposing of individual confessions in which the reader himself would have to seek a unity. The new title was again a plural, and this time the elements were even more manifestly, in the very disposition of the text, discrete. But in addition, whereas the term *Confessions* implies a listener or reader, the term *Rêveries* in itself implies none (although the very first sentence in fact creates one); it indicates a freely wandering discourse, without order or objective.[27]

Presenting themselves as a continuation ("comme un appendice") of the *Confessions*, the *Rêveries* were, moreover, without beginning or end, and the text itself constantly emphasized its own lack of structure. The first sentence, "Me voici donc seul sur la terre," is not an initiating sentence, since *donc* implies a previous statement upon which the present one follows. Similarly the pronoun *ils* a few lines from the beginning has no antecedent and presumably refers for its meaning to some other text of which the present one is a prolongation. The relation of narrative, of *récit*, to discourse (that is, the dialogue of the speaker or narrator with the reader) is now heavily weighted in favor of discourse. This book is not, in sum, a book, a story, nor the orderly narrative of a life: it presents itself as a monologue in which a speaker rambles freely on, without attempting to shape or order his discourse. It is not, ostensibly, addressed to the reader, but overheard by him, as it were, in much the same way as Diderot's proposed realist plays were to be acted without reference to an audience, and as if the latter did not exist. The codes of literary exchange are thus declared to be irrelevant. Indeed, the inanity of the literary institution is itself a theme of the author's "ramblings." In the Fourth Promenade he declares that there are only a very few books that he still reads, in the Fifth, the life of nature—"*fleurs*" and

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"*foins*"—is contrasted with the artifice and sterility of "*paperasses*" and "*bouquinerie.*"[28] Several times the text is referred to as "*ces feuilles,*" as though to underline that there will be no constraint, no attempt to create order, unity, composition, a book: "Ces feuilles ne seront . . . qu'un informe journal de mes rêveries."[29] The book disintegrates into its pages; the life story crumbles into the day-to-day notations of a *journal*; invention (*inventio*) and composition (*dispositio*) are put aside in favor of *rêveries.* Made of fragments not forced into place but simply set alongside or added to each other, the text as a whole is a fragment to be set alongside or added to the *Confessions.* No constraint is to be placed on the flow of the discourse; on the contrary, "every stray idea that comes to my mind during my rambles will find its place. I shall say what I thought exactly as it came to me and with as little connection as the ideas of the day before usually have with those of the morrow."[30] The relation to rambling, *promenade,* made explicit both in this passage and in the title and section headings, emphasizes the unstructured, uncontrolled, aimless character claimed for the text. Even the confessional and apologetic intentions of the earlier work are disavowed: "These pages may be regarded as an appendix to my *Confessions*, but I will not now give them that title. . . . What should I have to confess: henceforth I am nothing in the world of men."[31]

There can be no question of a familiar structure or order in these *Rêveries*, since the situation out of which they emerged is presented as a totally unstructured or destructured one. Terms like "read," "write," "book," "author," "reader," and so forth lose their meaning when the line between waking and dreaming is blurred and the world around is experienced as a "cahos incompréhensible." Rousseau's account of his situation at the time of writing the *Rêveries* is of a man who has lost his bearings, who does not know where he is.[32] Anything is now possible and no order seems natural or proper. Moreover, the attempt to make order has only aggravated disorder. "Je n'ai fait en me débattant que m'enlacer davantage."[33] The strategy of the *Rêveries*, therefore, will be to have no strategy. Instead of trying to control everything, to enclose everything, the speaker will let everything out; say everything ("J'ai tout dit"[34]) instead of trying to suppress it, release meaning instead of trying to contain it. *Rêverie* for Rousseau, is a function not of *mémoire* (the active faculty of recollection, as Condillac conceived it) but of *réminiscence*, something more passive, closer to what later came to be called *mémoire involontaire*.[35]

Almost a century later, in the dedication to his friend Ogarev, with which he prefaced his memoirs, Alexander Herzen reflected on the collection of fragments written at various times in the course of his life which he had put together to constitute a volume. "In these annexes, superstructures, extensions, there *is* a unity," he wrote, "at least I think so." And like Rousseau in the moving evocation, in the last of the *Rêveries*, of his first meeting with Madame de Warens, Herzen concluded his letter by recalling the youthful vow taken by the two friends thirty-three years earlier on the Sparrow Hills outside Moscow, and by suggesting a certain permanence in the midst of change, a unity running through the diversity and strange accidents of his life, an inner continuity which exile had not interrupted: "Life . . . lives, peoples, revolutions, beloved faces have appeared, changed and vanished between the Sparrow Hills and Primrose Hill; already their traces have almost been swept away by the pitiless whirlwind

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of events. The rhythm round me has changed: the Thames flows instead of the Moscow River, and I am surrounded by strange people . . . and there is no more a way for us back to our country . . . only the dream of two boys, one of thirteen and the other of eleven, has remained intact."[36]

Herzen thus suggests in a letter added to the fragments he has brought together that there may be a unity in them, but he concedes that in the end it is the reader who must decide. The claim, in short, is that he has no desire to impose unity on his text and that he himself, as a reader of his own text, enjoys no privileged status. Of course, Herzen's gesture can be viewed as a ruse by which rhetoric disguises its own presence. The fragmentary presentation of the text may be intended to communicate more effectively the unity and meaning which the author wishes to appear not to have imposed, yet does not refrain from suggesting. The historian Barante outlined such a strategy at the beginning of the nineteenth century when he declared that people could no longer be convinced by tendentious historians.[37] A philosophy of history can no longer be imposed on the reader, he wrote: if there is to be one it must be seen to emerge from the facts themselves. Barante's own method of writing the history of the later Middle Ages was to sew together the work of the chroniclers of the period. Yet, however masked it may be, his own presence as the invisible guiding hand of the text could not be completely concealed.

It may not be unreasonable, however, to take Herzen at his word and to grant that he may truly have wished to give a degree of freedom to his text, to let the air circulate through it. The reader, Herzen seems to propose, has a significant task to perform: he must hearken to barely audible voices in the text, voices which the author himself may not have heard at the time of writing, and whose objective existence in the text he cannot, moreover, guarantee. Herzen sees himself as a creative reader of his own work: "It is very possible that I have greatly overestimated [it], that in these rough sketches there is much that is hidden away but only for me; perhaps I read into it much more than was written; what I have said inspires me with dreams, and work like hieroglyphs to which I hold the key."[38]

In attending to the secret desire of the text, in short, the reader unlocks his own. The uncertainty that hovers around Herzen's professed disdain for order (is it the ultimate ruse of order, or is it an authentic, albeit inevitably limited attempt to release language from its prison of conventions, so that it can invent a different order from the one we expect and are familiar with?) also attends Rousseau's autobiographical enterprise. The rejection of order and method, of all forcing or constraint, is explicit and vehement in the *Rêveries*. To understand his situation, Rousseau acknowledges, "il y faudrait procéder avec ordre et méthode." But this course is rejected:

> I am incapable of carrying out this task; indeed, it would deflect me from my goal, which is to come to an awareness of the modifications taking place in my soul and of their order and sequence. I shall carry out on myself, in some respects, the operations that physicists carry out on the air in order to learn its daily condition. I shall apply the barometer to my soul, and these operations, well conducted and repeated over a long period could well supply results as reliable as theirs. But I do not plan to go so far. I shall be content to register the results of the operations without seeking to reduce them to a system.[39]

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Above all, Rousseau's aim is to liberate "les élans du désir."[40] For desire, he now believes, is his true nature, irresistible, overturning in the end everything in its path, like the great Dane in the Second Promenade. To struggle against it is vain and counterproductive, and it is far better to let it have its head. A significant part of the *Rêveries* is taken up by an apologia for desire, imagination, fantasy: "Je laisse ma tête entiérement libre, et mes idées suivre leur pente sans resistance et sans gêne."[41] "Me laisser aller et dériver lentement au gré de l'eau"[42] seems to be the password to the entire text. Everywhere pleasure, fantasy, idle observation, the release of libido[43] are opposed to obligation, virtue, theory, reason. On the intellectual plane, systematic thought is accompanied by an experience of constraint, limitation, repression: "I have sometimes thought quite deeply, but rarely with pleasure, almost always against my inclination and as if forced to do so: reverie relaxes me and delights me, reflection wearies me and fills me with gloom; thinking was always for me a laborious, thankless occupation. Sometimes my reveries become meditations, but more often it is my meditations that turn into reveries, and during these wanderings my soul strays and floats through the universe on the wings of imagination amidst ecstasies which surpass every other enjoyment."[44] Truth itself is seen as repressive and guilt-inducing, yet another constraint imposed on desire. "La triste vérité," Rousseau calls it.[45] Though "la vérité générale et abstraite"—by which he appears to have meant logical truths, the so-called *vérités de raison*—is not questioned, particular and individual truth—the *vérités de fait*—is "pas toujours un bien, . . . quelquefois un mal, très souvent une chose indiférente." Truth can be acknowledged to have value if it concerns justice or has some other utility; otherwise it is an empty abstraction, "un être metaphysique," which serves as a bogey man to make us suppress our dreams and desires.[46] There is even a suggestion that truth is related to sterility, silence, and death, while fiction, in releasing our dreams and inventions, is related to speech, history, and life itself.[47]

In the moral sphere, virtue and obligation are sad and imprisoning. Only actions performed out of desire provide the joy of release. Rousseau accepts that virtue consists in the victory of duty over desire, but just as he saw in his own reason only a mask of desire, so his virtue appears to him to be another disguise of desire:

> The opinion I had long held of my own virtue was greatly diminished; for there is no virtue in following one's inclinations and in procuring for oneself, when one is so inclined, the pleasure of doing good. On the contrary, virtue consists in overcoming inclination where duty demands it, in order that the prescriptions of virtue be carried out, and that is what I have been less capable of than any man alive. Born with lively feelings and a good heart, carrying compassion to the point of weakness, and feeling myself exalted by everything that carries the mark of generosity, I was humane, charitable, helpful to others by inclination, indeed out of passionate desire.[48]

Inevitably, when desire is lacking, virtue is experienced as an intolerable constraint—"la chaîne des devoirs," "une gêne presque insupportable," "d'onéreux assujetissemens."[49] Duty emerges from the long ethical meditation of the Sixth Promenade as an attempt to codify, systematize, and routinize behavior which

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springs from desire. By securing it from the contingency and the danger of desire, however, morality also removes it from its source of renewal.

Desire is presented throughout the *Rêveries*, however, as innocent, nontransgressional. The Seventh Promenade opens with a formal declaration:

> I now have no other rule of conduct than that of following my inclination in everything, without any constraint. I can do nothing about my destiny, I have only innocent inclinations, and since the opinions and judgments of men are henceforth null and void as far as I am concerned, good sense itself requires that, in everything that is still within my scope of action, I should do what appeals to me, whether in public or in private, with no other rule to guide me than my own pleasure, and no other limit than the limited strength remaining to me.[50]

It is our social and cultural categories and prohibitions, Rousseau protests, that degrade our desires and turn them into matters of shame and dishonor. In the eye, on the tongue of the other, my desire is degraded. "Moi qui me sentais digne d'amour et d'estime, moi qui me croyais honoré, chéri, comme je meritois de l'être, je me vis travesti tout d'un coup en un monstre affreux."[51] Rousseau keeps affirming the innocence of desire and of "le plaisir d'écrire"[52] in the face of an inexorably stern and suspicious Judge or Father, whose harsh, unfriendly, and all-seeing gaze is turned relentlessly on him, as in the two episodes recounted in the Ninth Promenade. In both of these, a spontaneous, and, of course, "innocent," manifestation of affection is driven back by the strong disapproval of the Father: in one case, the father of the little boy, in the other the old military pensioner.[53] In the end the rambler comes in desperation to repudiate, before the eyes of the reader, all judgments of morality. "Je n'ai pas plus à me louer qu'à me blâmer."[54] The world of the rambler, in short, is a world of innocence, ignorant of social prohibitions, of good, and of evil.

Rousseau's protestation of the innocence of desire is accompanied by an affirmation of the innocent, nontransgressional character of writing, through which desire is released. The sustained apology for botany in the Seventh Promenade and the vehement repudiation, in contrast, of metallurgy and anatomy appear to be an indirect attempt to justify a new kind of writing, the art Rousseau believed he was practicing in the *Rêveries* themselves.

The dichotomies characteristic of all Rousseau's works are also found throughout the *Rêveries*: on the one hand, immediacy, the absence of limits and of the weight of personal identity, as in the reawakening or rebirth after the fall in the Second Promenade; on the other, alienation, imprisonment, obscurity, insecurity; on the one hand the warmth of nature, "la mére commune,"[55] on the other, the coldness and cruelty of human relations. The joy of direct contact with natural objects is contrasted, in particular, with the sterility and dreariness of writing: "Above all, one of my greatest delights was to have my books still stacked away in their boxes and to be without a writing table. When the wretchedness of letters received forced me to take up my pen to answer them, I reluctantly borrowed the Collector's writing table, but I hastened to return it to him, in the vain hope that I would never have to borrow it again. In place of all that dreary scribble-scrabble and bookery I filled my room with flowers and grasses."[56]

It emerges in the Fifth Promenade, however, that what is often called life—immediacy, presence, plenitude, enjoyment[57]—is closely akin to death. The

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desire to be reborn is also the desire to "finir mes jours."[58] Some otherness, some differentiation seems necessary to supplement the life that is on the verge of extinction as the wished for state of fullness and indifferentiation is approached. The gentle sound of the waves and the lapping of the waters, their "flux et reflux," serves both to drive out all other awareness by focusing attention ("fixant mes sens") and to provide a minimal differentiation by which the consciousness of existence can be sustained.[59]

In the Seventh Promenade, it is botany that fulfills the task of concentrating attention, driving away disturbing or distracting ideas, and at the same time putting off the state of absolute ecstasy, in which the observer of nature, identifying with totality, loses all sense of himself or any other particular object.[60] Botanizing, however, appears to be a metaphor for writing in the *Rêveries*, and the discussion of botany indirectly concerns the production of the text in which it occurs. The modest instruments of the botanist, which Rousseau contrasts with the elaborate paraphernalia and the instruments of dissection or penetration required for almost all other sciences, are metonymies of the instruments of the writer, the eye and the hand:

> Plants seem to have been sown in abundance on the earth, like stars in the heavens, in order to draw man by the attractions of pleasure and curiosity to the study of nature. But the heavenly bodies are located at a great distance from us; to reach up to them and bring them closer to hand, we need preliminary knowledge, instruments, machines, very long ladders indeed. Plants lie naturally to hand. They come into existence beneath our feet and in our hands, so to speak, and if the diminutiveness of their essential parts sometimes conceals them from the naked eye, the instruments by which they are restored to view are much easier to use than those of astronomy. Botany is the study of the indolent and idle solitary: a magnifying glass and a stylus are all the equipment he needs to observe them. He reasons, he wanders freely from one object to another, he inspects each flower with interest and curiosity, and as soon as he begins to comprehend the laws of their structure, observing them gives him a painless pleasure that is as keen as if it had been procured at great cost.[61]

Similarly, the *herbier* in which the botanist arranges his specimens functions in the same way as the text of the *Rêveries* itself, that is, as a set of signs that substitute for presence.

> In my old age, on the threshold of my departure from this life . . . the reading [of my *Rêveries*] will recall to me the sweet pleasure I have in writing them and, resuscitating time past for me, will duplicate, so to speak, my existence. In spite of my fellow-men, I shall still be able to enjoy the charms of society and, decrepit, I shall live with myself at an earlier age, as I would live with a less aged friend.[62]

> All my botanical excursions, the diverse impressions left on me by the locality of the objects that caught my attention, the ideas it inspired in me, the incidents associated with it, all these things have left me with impressions that are revived by the sight of the plants I collected in the course of my herborizations in these places. I shall never revisit those beautiful landscapes, those forests, those lakes, those woods, those rocks, those mountains the sight of which never left me unmoved, but now that I can no longer roam those blessed lands myself, I need only open my herbal and I am quickly transported there. The fragments of the plants I collected there are sufficient to bring the entire magnificent spectacle before me.

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> For me, this herbal is a journal that permits me to begin my herborizations anew with a new charm, and produces on me the same effect as an optical glass in which they would be instantaneously depicted before my eyes.[63]

Like other forms of substitution, writing—as a "supplement" of the live, spoken word—is roundly condemned in many texts of Rousseau.[64] And that condemnation is recalled in the Seventh Promenade by the condemnation of metallurgy and mining. Disdaining the "véritables richesses" distributed over the surface of the earth, the miner violates her, plunders her entrails, "searching . . . at the risk of his life and the expense of his health, for imaginary goods to supplement the real ones she used to offer him freely when he still knew how to enjoy them." The criticism of mining is recognizably the same as the criticism, in other texts, of every attempt to substitute signs for presence, "imaginary goods" for "real" ones, and notably of masturbation, the substitution of an image for the true object of desire, and of writing, the substitution of an image for the living word. It has been shown that Rousseau's own text belies in places the pathological character it ascribes to masturbation and writing. Far from being deviations from a norm of presence, the displacement and substitution that are condemned in masturbation are described in the *Confessions* as features of the relations Rousseau entertains with Madame de Warens and with Thérèse,[65] and in the same way writing, far from being an aberration or degradation of something original and superior, turns out to reveal the essential characteristics of all language.[66] Over a vast expanse of Rousseau's text, however, the need to resort to these substitutions is ardently regretted. Rousseau's ideal nature, as is well known, is naturally generous and giving. As there is no scarcity and no interdiction, there is neither transgression nor possession, neither violence nor any need to ravish.[67] Since no fruit is forbidden, one has only to pick from the tree of abundance. Consequently there is no labor, no penetration (no agriculture, only food gathering), no attempt to control or systematize, no art and no science. Inexplicably, however, nature fails at some points (or, in Rousseau's temporal scheme, ceases at some point) to provide abundantly for her children. The arts and sciences, representing the effort to make up for this failure, gradually evince nature altogether, creating in her place a world of substitutions, of *ersatz* desires and *ersatz* goods. For Rousseau, one is tempted to say, the incest prohibition, the foundation of human culture and society, is the original unnatural act, the original transgression against nature, which imposes the need to resort to substitutions. At the same time, however, the prohibition also protects from nature and makes individual identity possible. Evil, in sum, is nothing other than difference, individual identity itself, and it is our individuality that is the origin of our guilt. The miner, like the tragic heroine of Racine, oppressed by guilt, "fuit le soleil et le jour qu'il n'est plus digne de voir,"[68] and his blindness is at once the cause and the consequence of his transgression.

Writing, especially writing that attempts to mark or discover a difference, a particularity, is thus for Rousseau both the consequence of an original transgression and a transgressional act in itself. It confirms and perpetuates exclusiveness, alienation, and the devious strategy of substitution. Not surprisingly, the *Rêveries*, which are in some respects the most transgressional and revolutionary of Rousseau's writings, are also the text in which he makes the most deter-

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mined effort to deny the transgressional character of his writing and to outline a form of writing that is innocent. The apology of botany suggests that there is an "art of nature," a kind of "natural" writing that can restore or revive the transgressor and heal the sickness caused by the other writing. "If the child cannot cure himself," the *Emile* teaches, "let him learn at least how to be sick; this art can supplement the other, and often it is far more successful; it is the art of nature. When an animal is sick, it suffers in silence and lies quite still: and you don't see more animals languishing in sickness than humans. How many people who have been killed by impatience, by fear, by anxiety, and, above all, by remedies, would have been spared by their disease and cured by time alone."[69]

"*M'abstenir*" is indeed a recurrent and, one senses, a crucial term in the *Rêveries*. But the passivity of the *Rêveries* is no longer a "natural" condition; it is itself the product of art, of discipline, of the "art of nature." Rousseau complained, as we saw, of the strains imposed upon him by the substitution of "artificial" goals for "natural" ones, and of the displacement or repression of impulse in the conditions of social life. But he did not advocate a return to the natural state. On the contrary, he tried, by a new art, to repair the damage wrought by the other. "Whenever I feel passion rising up in me, I let my blood grow warm, and anger or indignation take over my senses. I let nature have her way with this first explosion, which all my strength would have been insufficient to stop or suspend. I try only to prevent the consequences before it has really produced its effect. The fire that glints in our eyes, the warmth that colors the cheeks, the trembling in our limbs, the palpitations that makes us breathless—all that belongs to our physical nature and no reasoning can have any power over it; but after we have given our nature its head, we can become masters of ourselves once again by gradually regaining control of our senses. That is what I have tried to achieve—for a long time to no avail, but now, at last, with more success."[70]

Botany, for Rousseau, is another art of nature, a science that deliberately eschews the practices of science, the remedies by which science seeks to supplement nature. It is a loving curiosity, a gentle caressing of the surface of nature, a catalogue and a nomenclature of the visible, requiring, apparently, no violence and no aggression. In this respect it is carefully distinguished not only from mining and anatomy, both of which involve an unveiling of the invisible and a transgression of limits apparently set by nature, but also from what for Rousseau was its other or its double—the search for cures and remedies, pharmacy. The art of nature thus defines itself against those transgressional sciences—"les mauvaises sciences, la pharmacie défendue des poisons et l'exécrable anatomie," the products of "l'université criminelle de la sorcière, du berger, du bourreau"—which, according to Michelet, one of Rousseau's more avid readers, are the origins of modern science.[71] Unlike the miner, pursuing in the womb of the earth substitutes for the goods from which his blindness has cut him off forever, the botanist is above all else a spectator, a seer, standing innocent and unarmed, like Adam in the Garden, before the object of his love.

As Rousseau's enterprise led him further and further from the prescribed and institutionalized ways of contemporary literature and life, his need to disguise his activity from others and from himself, to present it as innocent and essentially passive, grew, it seems, increasingly urgent. The last portrait of him-

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self that the intrepid and indefatigable explorer leaves us with is that of an indolent amateur, passing innocently and aimlessly over the surface of nature and idly applying the barometer to his soul.

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[1]Letter to his mother, February 13, 1821, quoted in Edgar Quinet, *Histoire de mes idées*, Introduction, bibliographie, et notes par Simone Bernard-Griffiths (Paris: Flammarion, 1972. Nouvelle Bibliothèque Romantique), p. 18. Translation mine.

[2]Hermine de Saussure, *Etude sur le sort des manuscrits de Jean-Jacques Rousseau* (Neuchâtel: Editions H. Messeiller, 1974), pp. 15, 18.

[3]See Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Les Confessions: reproduction du manuscrit de Neuchâtel*, Preface de Pierre-Paul Clément (Lausanne: Bibliothèque romande, 1973).

[4]Quérard (*Dictionnaire des ouvrages anonymes*) lists a few: *Les Confessions d'un fat, par le chevalier de la B.* (Paris, 1749), *Les Confessions de la baronne de*** rédigées par M. le C. D**** (1743), *Les Confessions de Mademoiselle de Mainville à son amie* (Paris, 1768). The title appears to have been fairly rare in fiction at the time Rousseau was working on his *Confessions*.

[5]*Confessions*, book 7, in *Oeuvres complètes de Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, ed. Bernard Gagnebin and Marcel Raymond, 4 vols. (Paris: Gallimard, 1959–1969. Bibliothèque de la Pléiade), vol. 1, p. 290. Subsequent references to Rousseau's works are also to the Pléiade edition. Translations are mine throughout. (A new translation of the *Rêveries du promeneur solitaire* is being prepared for Penguin Books by Peter France. At present there is no readily accessible translation. The English translations of the *Confessions* which I was able to consult did not do justice, in my view, to certain crucial terms, such as *jouissance*.)

[6]See Pierre Courcelle, *Les Confessions de Saint Augustin dans la tradition littéraire* (Paris: Etudes augustiniennes, 1963).

[7]Ibid., pp. 456–457. The title of a 1703 edition of Augustine's *Confessions* gives an idea of the shift of interest: *Les Confessions de Saint Augustin abrégées, où l'on n'a mis que ce qui est le plus touchant et le plus à la portée de tout le monde*. Traduction nouvelle (Paris: Charles Robustel, 1703).

[8]The use of names served a similar purpose in Diderot's work, though it was often attended by a malicious humor not found in Rousseau.

[9]Philippe Lejeune, *L'Autobiographie en France* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1971); *Le Pacte autobiographique* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1975).

[10]Francis R. Hart, "Notes for an Anatomy of Modern Autobiography," in *New Directions in Literary History*, ed. Ralph Cohen (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974), p. 224.

[11]The function of autobiography in relation to fictional writing should in all likelihood be considered in a historical perspective. In periods of lively experimentation and innovation in fiction, traditional autobiography may function as a conservative force, providing for a time of doubt and disorder, the illusion of a chronology, a unified point of view, a unified personal identity. The narrative strategies of fictional and of autobiographical writing are closely interwoven and interdependent.

[12]See P. Hernadi, "Clio's Cousins," *New Literary History*, 7 (1976): 252–253.

[13]*Confessions*, p. 1153.

[14]Ibid., p. 1150; see also p. 1153: "Jamais homme n'a dit de lui-même ce que j'ai dit de moi."

[15]Ibid., p. 1150.

[16]Ibid., pp. 1150–1151.

[17]Ibid., p. 5.

[18]Ibid., p. 1151.

[19]*The Education of Henry Adams* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1918), Preface.

[20]*Histoire de mes idées*, p. 34.

[21]Ibid., pp. 43–44.

[22]Ibid., pp. 45–47.

[23]"Modern Autobiography," p. 227.

[24]See Frank D. McConnell, *The Confessional Imagination: A Reading of Wordsworth's "Prelude"* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974). The aim of confession, according to McConnell, is "to render permanent and unassailable the experience of conversion;" it "heals that daemonic split of I's [i.e. between the I of redeemed experience and the I of benighted daemonic experiences] by asserting past language to have been the unfolding manifestation of the divine Word one is now prepared to recognize and speak. The narrative is a mirror reflection of the life, and as such it completes and eternalizes the unity toward which the life strives" (p. 161).

[25]"Lettres à M. le Président de Malesherbes," Letter 2, vol. 1, pp. 1135–1136.

[26]*Confessions*, pp. 1113–1114.

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[27]See Marcel Raymond, "Rêver à la suisse," *Cahiers du Sud*, 53 (1962): 358–373.
[28]*Rêveries*, vol. 1, pp. 1024, 1042.
[29]Ibid., p. 1000.
[30]Ibid.
[31]Ibid.
[32]Ibid., p. 995.
[33]Ibid., p. 996.
[34]Ibid., p. 1035.
[35]Ibid. p. 1002. Cf. the note by Marcel Raymond, p. 1770.
[36]Alexander Herzen, *My Past and Thoughts*, trans. Constance Garnett, rev. Humphrey Higgens (London: Chatto and Windus, 1968), vol. 1, p. xlvi.
[37]Prosper de Barante, *Histoire des Ducs de Bourgogne de la Maison de Valois, 1364–1477*, 12 vols. (Paris, 1824–26), vol. 1, p. xxxvi.
[38]*My Past and Thoughts*, p. xl, p. xlv.
[39]*Rêveries*, pp. 1000–1001.
[40]Ibid., p. 1045.
[41]Ibid., p. 1002.
[42]Ibid., p. 1044.
[43]Ibid., p. 1052, where in a rare humorous moment Rousseau points to the erotic character of desire.
[44]Ibid., pp. 1061–1062.
[45]Ibid., p. 1011.
[46]Ibid., pp. 1026, 1038–1039.
[47]Ibid., pp. 1035, 1038.
[48]Ibid., pp. 1052–1053.
[49]Ibid., pp. 1051–1052.
[50]Ibid., p. 1060.
[51]Ibid., p. 1076.
[52]Ibid., p. 1038.
[53]Ibid., pp. 1089–1090, 1095.
[54]Ibid., p. 1000.
[55]Ibid., p. 1066.
[56]Ibid., p. 1042.
[57]Ibid., p. 1099: "J'ai joui d'un siécle de vie et d'un bonheur pur et plein qui couvre de son charme tout ce que mon sort présent a d'affreux."
[58]Ibid., p. 1048.
[59]Ibid., p. 1045.
[60]Ibid., pp. 1062–1063.
[61]Ibid., p. 1069.
[62]Ibid., p. 1001.
[63]Ibid., p. 1073.
[64]See Jacques Derrida, *De la Grammatologie* (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1967).
[65]See *Confessions*, book 5: "In the midst of the enjoyment of love I was devoured by need of love. I had a tender mother, a beloved friend, but I required a mistress. I imagined one in Mamma's place. I endowed her with a thousand forms in order to deceive myself. If I had thought I was holding Mamma in my arms when I held her, my embraces would have been as tender, but all my desire would have been extinguished. I should have sobbed with affection, but I should not have enjoyed her. Enjoyment? Is this a happiness that is vouchsafed to man? Ah, if once in my life I had succeeded in tasting the joys of love in all their fullness I do not think my frail existence could have endured it; I should have died on the spot" (p. 219).

Similarly, in book 7: "Fate had taken from me, estranged from me, at least in part, that heart for which nature had made me. As of then, I was alone, for there was never any intermediary for me between all and nothing at all. In Thérèse I found the supplement I needed; thanks to her, I lived as happy as I was capable of being . . ." (p. 332).
[66]Derrida, *De la Grammatologie*, pp. 235–238, 338–339 et passim.
[67]Compare Rousseau's image of nature with his portrait of Madame de Warens in *Confessions*, book 5. As Rousseau presents her, she was "caressante et tranquille," seeking to give pleasure, but taking none herself, and giving herself generously, indiscriminately even, to all who needed her (pp. 197–199).
[68]*Rêveries*, p. 1067.
[69]*Émile*, vol. 2, p. 271.
[70]*Rêveries*, p. 1083.
[71]Jules Michelet, *La Sorcière*, Introduction (Paris: Julliard, 1964), pp. 31–32. Michelet also knew and admired something remarkably akin to Rousseau's innocent art of botany: see the eulogy of

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Wilson, the Scottish-American ornithologist, in *L'Oiseau* (Paris: Calmann Levy, n.d.), pp. 127–134. Like Rousseau's natural man, Wilson is at home in nature, having "no home to return to, no wife, no child waiting for him," but only "the great family he observes and describes. He has friends, to be sure: those who have not yet learned to fear man and who come and perch on his tree and chat with him" (p. 131). And like the botanist of the *Rêveries*, Michelet's ornithologist knows no generalities, only individuals. "Wilson does not know the bird in general, but this or that individual, of this or that age, of this or that plumage, in these or those circumstances. He knows him, has seen him, revisited him, and he will tell you what he does, what he eats, how he behaves, this or that adventure that befell him, this or that anecdote about him" (p. 132). But just as the transgressional character of science intrudes upon Rousseau's idyllic botanizing in the form of the search for simples and cures—pharmacy—it also reappears in Michelet's natural history, which, in general, is presented as innocent and peaceful, a repose and consolation from the dangerous and exhausting labors of the historian of human society. Alongside the portraits of naturalists in the Muséum d'histoire naturelle, Michelet pleads, should be placed the portraits of those other heroes of natural history, the explorers. While the naturalists, such as Wilson, live at peace with a friendly and beneficent nature ("ami des buffles et convive des ours, mangeant les fruits sauvages"), the explorers ("amants ardents") penetrate dangerous and hostile terrains ("forêts meutrières où l'on ne respire que la mort") in order to bring back, often at the cost of their lives ("par leurs travaux, leurs périls, en hasardant cent fois leur vie") the treasures of nature. *L'Oiseau*, pp. 96–97)

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Rousseau and the Paradoxes of the Dramatic Imagination

The Ambivalent Imagination[1]

ROUSSEAU HAS BEEN CHARGED with every hypocrisy, every self-contradiction, every paradox that can possibly afflict a man who presumes to insist on integral unity in his life and his work. His arguments for democracy have been labeled totalitarian, his love of solitude has been given the name misanthropy, his educational schemes have been branded manipulative and authoritarian, his condemnation of urban society has been construed as the revenge of a social misfit, and his radical individualism has been understood as rationalized paranoia.

Of all such charges, the one leveled by Voltaire is perhaps the most telling, certainly the most provocative: Rousseau, wrote his most captious antagonist, was "like Achilles who rose up against glory, and like Malebranche whose brilliant imagination caused him to write against imagination." So he was. For he spent his life in an imaginative and mostly solitary reverie that produced a corpus of work equally inspired by and directed against imagination. He deployed the art of writing with an unprecedented originality to assail the arts and their corruptions. He made a science of the ills imparted by science and lent his genius to a celebration of commonality. He was a philosopher who abhorred the manipulative sterilities of philosophy, a lawgiver with no taste for community life, a "citizen of Geneva" who could live tranquilly only alone, and a playwright for whom dramatic art appeared both as symptom of and catalyst for all the errors and vices of his era.

He acknowledged much of this freely, anticipating bitterly in the *Preface* to his play *Narcisse* that it would indeed "one day be said this declared enemy of arts and sciences nevertheless wrote and published works for the theater. And this declaration will, I avow, be a bitter and ironic comment not on me, but on my century."[2] Yet, in this, Rousseau was *more* than his century, a victim not of the Age of Reason and its careful harmonies, but of modernity—of a spiritual tumult known better to our age than to Rousseau's own. In Rousseau's ambivalence about imagination and about a theater in which imagination was the chief moving force is revealed the principal dilemma of modernity: the fragmentation of the modern self, alienated both from the world and from its own nature, into pieces apparently beyond the integrating ministrations of educators, lawgivers, or artists. That Rousseau plied the trade of all three in the face of a fragmenta-

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tion, an alienation within himself he knew to be intractable, only confirms his modernity.

It was of course no particular feat of Rousseau's alone that he spent his life confronting the human condition by confronting himself, or that he attributed to that condition problems first disclosed by self-examination. The self as a discrete mass of sentiments and desires, at once both autonomous and equal to other selves, had been at the center of European thought for several centuries. English empiricists like Hobbes, Locke, and Hume had understood the individual sense perceptor to hold the key to all knowledge and thus to philosophy, science, and morals. Accordingly, they had insisted in their political theory both on treating the individual as the source of all moral and political obligation and on construing the individual as the base unit from which all social associations were to be constructed and justified.

Hobbes had gone still further, introducing in the opening passages of the *Leviathan* a solipsism that was to become a distinctive feature of all subsequent methodological individualism; he wrote, "whosoever looketh into himself, and considereth what he doth, when he does think, opine, reason, hope, fear, etc., and upon what grounds; he shall thereby read and know, what are the thoughts of all other men upon like occasion." Rousseau had given to this Hobbesian version of the ancient injunction "know thyself" the specificity of a life self-consciously designed to yield and to reflect the guiding principles of his thought. Man's paradoxes were his own personal dilemmas; his traumas were challenges for the entire species. His fragmentation suggested a social contagion; the world's injustice mirrored irreconcilable forces in his soul. If solutions were possible—unlike the speculations of abstract philosophy—they had to be lived, not just thought.

Hobbesian man was alienated and self-aware. Rousseauan man, Rousseau himself, was much more. Like the remarkable character invented by Diderot (once Rousseau's closest companion and spiritual compatriot) in *Rameau's Nephew*, Rousseau was surely "one of the oddest characters in the country . . . a compound of elevation and abjectness, of good sense and lunacy . . . of decency and depravity," a man finally who had "no greater opposite than himself." Rousseau too must have been "born under all the changeful stars there are" (Diderot's epigraph from Horace for *Rameau's Nephew*). As he wrote in the *Confessions*, there were "two things, very opposite in me . . . my heart and understanding do not belong to the same individual." And this splintered self, Hobbesian man no longer at war with every other man but at war with himself, this self alone in the world, estranged from the race, existed on earth "as on a foreign planet, onto which one falls as from some other world that is home" (in the language of the First Promenade of his *Reveries of a Solitary Walker*).[3] How could such a life be anything but paradoxical? How was harmony possible, he asks in the *Emile*, when "drawn this way by nature and that way by man, compelled to yield to both forces, we make compromises and reach neither goal. We go through life, struggling and hesitating and die before we have found peace."

If, then, Rousseau's thought is strewn with paradoxes, it is not because he is incoherent or contradictory or a victim of philosophical dualism. It is rather because the human condition is no less paradoxical than Rousseau's own nature,

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and to think about it is necessarily to think in paradoxes. "Pardon me my paradoxes," Rousseau writes in the *Emile*, "it is necessary to make them when one thinks."

By paradoxes I mean here to suggest not dichotomies or simple oppositions in Rousseau's thought, but ambivalences that grow out of single ideas and their entailments, ambiguities that some might want to understand as dialectical. Thus, the paradox is not that Rousseau elucidated an ideal of the romantic solitary in the two *Discourses* and the autobiographical writings, whereas he constructed an ideal type of the communal citizen in the political writings. Rather it is that solitude itself was at one and the same time a necessity of human freedom, since only those who are independent can be free, *and* an impossibility under the actual conditions of human existence, since men cannot by their nature be independent. "A really happy man is a hermit," Rousseau observes in the *Emile*, "but only God enjoys happiness." Or, to take a correlative dilemma, the paradox is not that Rousseau was at once a romantic reactionary looking back to an ancient golden age of innocence at the same time that he was a romantic revolutionary perceiving in the faculty of perfectibility the possibility of a future golden age of virtue. It is rather that history itself yields both the possibility of perfection *and* the actuality of corruption as a consequence of the *same* all too human faculties. Or, considering these faculties themselves, the paradox is not that Rousseau understood imagination to be at war with innocence, and self-improvement to be at odds with simplicity, as if these were competing dispositions within human nature vying for dominion. Rather it is that imagination and self-improvement, as ineluctable facets of human nature and thus human history, destroyed as they created, corrupted as they improved, ruined as they civilized. In the language of the *Discourse on the Origins of Inequality*, the "unlimited faculty" of self-improvement (rooted in the imagination) "draws man out of his original state . . . successively producing in different ages his discoveries and his errors, his vices and his virtues . . . mak[ing] him at length a tyrant both over himself and over nature." So that finally even the polarization of natural man in a condition of innocence and social man in a condition of depravity, favored at times by Rousseau no less than by many of his commentators, yields to a more dialectical understanding: that of society itself, with all of its vices and errors, as a product of the very same nature responsible for simple, innocent men. Thus in his *Letter to Philopolis*, Rousseau is at pains to acknowledge that society is "as natural to the human species as decrepitude is to the individual."

The stunning modernity of Rousseau's thought can, then, be illuminated by dwelling on its paradoxes; its coherence can be discovered only when it is seen as dialectical rather than unitary, only when the tensions of modernity built into Rousseau's life and his work are recognized and explored.

Imagination and the Theater of Corruption[4]

These tensions are nowhere more evident than in Rousseau's treatment of dramatic art, where the dilemmas of the human imagination are central both to his predominant mood of pessimism and to the guarded optimism he occasionally risks enunciating.

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Initially, his pessimism about the theater quite overwhelms the hope. It is often hinted, not least of all by Rousseau himself, that the decade he spent in Paris in the 1740s while in his thirties, writing seven trivial comedies and a number of elegant little operettas, was to be regarded as the product of a misspent youth and the works themselves but callow indiscretions from the pen of a frivolous and unripened adolescent.[5] After all, the period concludes abruptly with the assault on artifice, urban life, and arts and letters of the *First Discourse*, published in 1751, and Rousseau's rather melodramatic abdication of drama, Paris, and their common fripperies. "I quit the world and its pomp," he recalls much later in the Third Promenade of his *Reveries of a Solitary Walker*, "I renounced all adornments—no more epée, no more watch, no more white hosiery, no gilt, no wig . . . and above all, an uprooting from my heart of that cupidity, that lust, which gives value to all those other things I abjured."

In this spirit, in the *Preface* to his last play, *Narcisse*, he labeled the works he had produced for the theater as so many "illegitimate children that one caresses once more with pleasure, blushing still at being their father and then . . . sends off in search of their fortune without worrying too much about what they become." All of this might permit us to start taking Rousseau seriously only at that point when he stops taking theater seriously, and thus simply to overlook his writings for and about the theater.

Yet if the claim that paradox is the key to Rousseau's imagination and his thoughts on imagination is to be sustained, then surely the problematic and paradoxical years in Paris and the often tortured self-justifications associated with those years must be attended to. That Rousseau never completely dismissed his engagement in the theater world from his consciousness, that its dilemmas remained crucial to his confrontation with imagination throughout his life, and that his judgment about it was conflicted rather than monolithic are facts more than confirmed by a reading of the two major essays Rousseau devised in his attempt to come to terms with drama. The better known of the two is the *Letter to D'Alembert on Theater* composed in 1757 in defense of Geneva's sumptuary laws banning theater and in response to D'Alembert's essay on Geneva for the Great Encylopedia. Unexceptionable for the most part, the essay aroused Rousseau to action because Voltaire had managed to interpolate into it an appeal for the construction of a theater in Calvin's city, in part so that he might air his own dramas. Far less known, but perhaps no less important from the point of view of paradox, was Rousseau's *Preface* to the published version of *Narcisse*, Rousseau's most successful comedy, which, despite his disclaimers in the *Confessions* and elsewhere, apparently played with considerable effect at the Comédie Française in 1752, prior to his departure from Paris.

Both of these works make clear that Rousseau understood the problem of theater to be a central issue in his critique of civilization and understood imagination, in turn, to be central to his critique of theater. Indeed, the initial impression to be gained from the *Letter to D'Alembert*—an impression confirmed by his antagonism elsewhere in his writings—is that he viewed imagination with unmitigated alarm. In both the *Emile* and in *Julie* (*The New Héloïse*), though they are both works of a towering imagination, imagination is associated with the miseries endemic to the human condition. Thus, in *Julie* Rousseau seems to reconstruct a classical ascetic case against it: "The real world has boundaries, the

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world of the imagination is infinite. Since we cannot enlarge the real one, we must restrict the imaginative one, since all the suffering that makes us really miserable arises from the disparity between them."

Happiness is a function of the balance between power and needs. But while our power is dictated primarily by external conditions and is thus both fixed and limited, our needs vary. Despite the hubristic pretenses of modern civilization and the rise of the arts and sciences about which Rousseau is so skeptical, little can be done to enhance our power. Needs can be controlled and diminished, however, and frustration over the inability to gratify them correspondingly assuaged. Yet the tendencies of modern society, because of the imagination, are in the opposite direction: for it is the imagination which gives rise, as Rousseau notes in the *Emile,* to all the "errors . . . which transmute into vices the passions of finite beings, of angels even, if indeed they have passions." And it is the imagination which, by multiplying our wants and impelling us to compare ourselves to others, turns our simple, innocent self-love (*amour de soi*) into the corrosive social vice of vanity or selfishness (*amour-propre*). In a word, imagination becomes happiness's most troublesome adversary, corrupting self-love and simplicity, transforming natural and tractable needs into complex, insatiable wants, diminishing our effective power by enlarging our appetites, and finally robbing us of our innocence without ever compensating that loss with virtue.

These general complaints and the asceticism with which Rousseau affected to remedy them are unsurprising. They have an ancient lineage and are easily comprehended in our own era when resources are vanishing, powers flagging, and needs escalating in a fashion that suggests progress may cost more than it buys.

What was telling about Rousseau's complaint was not, then, its originality, but the concreteness with which he grounded it in his examination of dramatic art. Almost every one of Rousseau's particular arguments charging the theater with the corruption of the species hinges on what Rousseau understands as the unsettling, exacerbating, vicarious, titillating, and otherwise damaging irritations elicited by the play on imagination that lies at the heart of all drama. The general complaint is rehearsed in summary terms in the *Letter to D'Alembert* as follows: "The immediate power of the senses is weak and limited; it is through the intermediary of the imagination that they make their greatest ravages; it is the business of the imagination to irritate the desires in lending to their objects even more attractions than nature gave them; it is the imagination which scandalizes the eye in revealing to it what it sees not only as naked but as something that ought to be clothed."

The challenge Rousseau throws down to theater, this passage suggests, does more than echo Plato's hostility to dramatic poetry because, as Plato writes in the *Republic* in the course of banning Homer, it "sets up a vicious form of government in the individual soul" and is thus injurious to reason and moral instruction. Rousseau penetrates to the essence of dramatic performance with an assurance born of experience. The *Letter to D'Alembert* is not only as expert in its technical grasp of theater and its dramatic judgments as, say, Diderot's *Paradox of the Actor,* it is far more prophetic of the modern dilemmas of theater than the celebratory writings of Voltaire and other devotees of eighteenth-century theater, who practiced its craft rather more successfully than he did.

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Rousseau was persuaded that the theater corrupted virtue and injured the psychological conditions on which virtue depended in a number of interrelated ways, each of which touched on the role of imagination. His principal objection was that theater necessarily represented an affective rather than a cognitive medium so that, with the insidious help of the imagination, passion overwhelmed reason, and simulation and pretense (the play of plays) expelled authenticity and action. The drama may claim to play on passions only, as Aristotle thought, to purge them. Yet, Rousseau asks, "is it possible that in order to become temperate and prudent we must begin by being intemperate and mad?" How can the small voice of reason be heard in amphitheaters resonating with turbulent emotions? One can of course write an instructive play full of edifying homilies, but such plays, Rousseau the professional theater man understood all too well, "produce no effect. They are very instructive if you please, but they are even more boring. One might as well go to a sermon." One need only consult New York's Broadway listings and try to discover a truly serious play that is not a "classic" to confirm Rousseau's prudence.

In fact, the absence of reason in the theater compels the drama to play to and to coddle popular opinion and popular prejudice. A dramatist cannot afford to dissect public opinion and so is left to ape it. His dramas cannot govern the passions, and so they are left to unleash them. For a play's success is dependent on its capacity to please, and to please it must always follow, never lead, public opinion. "A good (successful) play never fails," Rousseau writes in the *Letter to D'Alembert*, quite without irony, "because a good play never shocks the morals and manners of its time."

Dramas, to borrow Plato's metaphor, can be effectively performed only in the Cave, where lighting effects can be staged, familiar shadows manipulated, and the chains of a captive audience rattled entertainingly, as they are tightened. Plato took poets to be men who "produce images at the third remove from reality"—copiers of copies. To Rousseau they are producers of fictions about fictions, traitors to truth, who use their perceptive understanding of prejudice to ensnare an audience in its own private cave of bias. The lawgiver presumably studies men to better insulate them from their weaknesses; the dramatist studies men to render them still more vulnerable to their weaknesses. "Fair is foul and foul is fair" stands as a motto to what Rousseau takes to be the moral confusions on which effective theater depends. Tragedy seems to excuse the most heinous crimes with a misplaced and sentimental compassion ruinous to moral judgment; comedy exposes the hypocrisies of the virtuous but never the vices of the villainous. It may on occasion make "fun of vices," but "without ever making virtue loved." The writers of comedy "know how to snuff out the lamp but . . . [they] never put any oil in it." So finally neither comedy nor tragedy is fit for instruction.

That this insistence on the incompatibility of entertainment and instruction is no mere conceit on Rousseau's part is perhaps most evident in the reappearance of the dilemma for every subsequent playwright, from Schiller and Lessing to Artaud and Brecht, who has aspired to a theater of illumination and edification and has hoped to find in the drama an ally of social change. As recently as 1948, Brecht put the dilemma in his *Short Organum* in terms that can only be called Rousseauan: "The problem holds for all art, and it is a vast one . . . how can the theater be both instructive and entertaining? How can it

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be divorced from spiritual dope traffic and turned from a home of illusions to a home of experience?" Rousseau was persuaded, because illusion and imagination were at its heart, that it could never do more than entertain. There are indications that Brecht reached the same conclusions at the end of his life.

If the theater, in its dependence on the exacerbation of passions, the titillation of vicarious desires, the coddling of prejudices, and the humoring of conventional opinions, everywhere uses the imagination to excite rather than calm, to undermine reason rather than reenforce it, it is also guilty in Rousseau's indictment of another set of sins: simulation, inauthenticity, vicariousness, and passivity. In playing to simulated sentiments and discharging fictitious obligations, the drama becomes a surrogate for action, rather than a spur to it. "In giving our tears to these fictions," Rousseau cautions in the *Letter to D'Alembert*, "we have satisfied all the rights of humanity without having to give anything more of ourselves." As is apparent in his *Paradox of the Actor*, Diderot thought it a compliment to the actor's talent for dissemblance that weeping maidens can seem moving and even beautiful on the stage, whereas in real life they are both ugly and ridiculous. To Rousseau this ability is but further proof of the denatured hypocrisy that defines acting and playing, and thus proof of theater's intrinsic inauthenticity. Indeed, the "fleeting and vain emotion" evoked in the imagination by stage characters, the "sterile pity" aroused by staged distress, have "never produced the slightest act of humanity." How could it be otherwise? For what is the talent of the actor? "It is the art of counterfeiting himself, of putting on another character than his own, of appearing different than he is, of becoming passionate in cold blood, of saying what he does not think . . .," Rousseau asserts in the *Letter to D'Alembert*.

The theater, in Rousseau's portrait of it, nourishes a silent conspiracy in imaginative self-deception, joined in by audience, actor, and dramatist. A titillating fiction is created, and the common illusions it generates permit all the participants to live out sterile fantasies without substance, to feel passions without consequence, to take risks with nothing at stake, to enjoy vicarious emotions without suffering, and to revel in sentiments without commitment or obligation. The counterfeit existence they together manufacture, if only for a few hours, impairs their autonomy, corrodes their will, and relieves them of public responsibility for their private biases. Rousseau would have found nothing surprising in Broadway audiences who, after applauding the sentiments of such black plays as *Raisin in the Sun* or *Dutchman* or *Black Terror*, rush anxiously from the theater into waiting taxis, buses, and limosines that will protect them—remove them—from an inner city teeming with real-life equivalents of the struggling stage characters they have just finished cheering. Experience in the theater, Rousseau believed, becomes a means to and an excuse for avoiding experience in the world.

The ultimate result of all this titillation is not Dionysian frenzy, but numbness. In Schiller's lugubrious description of the sort of theater he abhorred and aspired to overcome, drama "takes to her broad bosom the dull-witted teacher and the tired businessman and lulls the spirit into a magnetic sleep by warming up the numbed senses and giving the imagination a dull rocking."

Imagination is from first to last the chief culprit in the *Letter to D'Alembert*. The letter's case against theater thus resonates with a pessimism startling to those accustomed to reading Rousseau as a poet of the imagination and perhaps

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the century's most inspiring prophet of perfectibility—roles which earned him the reverence of the revolutionaries who brought his remains to Paris during their great uprising and the awe of each succeeding generation of romantics into the present century. Yet if the fall of man depicted in the two *Discourses* is not a consequence of avoidable contingencies of social organization and the unnatural history leading to it, how much romantic or revolutionary hope is to be found in the resuscitation of natural instincts, one apparent strategy in the *Emile*, or in prudent laws aimed at the development of our faculties, the strategy of the *Social Contract*? Read as an optimist, Rousseau would seem to allow that the damaging acquisitions of civilization need not be fatal: we can retrogress to a golden age in keeping with the romantic impulses of the *New Héloïse* or step forward into a golden age in keeping with the potential of self-improvement, and thus either retrieve or achieve the virtue once promised by our innocence.

But read as a pessimist in accordance with the assault on imagination in the *Letter to D'Alembert*, Rousseau seems far less permissive. That assault suggests that the fall of man is the product of inborn rather than acquired characteristics—that we are miserable not because we are civilized but because we are men—and that, as a consequence, our suffering is ineluctable and our destiny irredeemable. If, in other words, the imagination that distinguishes us from the animals and defines us as human is itself the culprit in our corruption, we are doomed because of, rather than in spite of, our humanity. Moreover, if imagination is the villain, then the theater remains one of the most dangerous of all of our corrupting institutions. For it is designed precisely to provoke the imagination and to force it into the service of the passions more quintessentially than any of its sister arts and sciences. With the human species Rousseau would save from the imaginative corruptions of theater beyond salvation, what can he do but flail drama still more vehemently for indulging so well the fatal curse that has ruined mankind?

Imagination and the Theater of Amelioration

Yet there is in this interpretation a monolithic and tendentious one-sidedness that seems out of harmony with the paradoxical character of Rousseau's thought and with the kinds of optimism that can also be identified in his writings. Imagination plays too powerful a role in the faculty of self-improvement to be dismissed as wholly ruinous; and pessimism, if it is the distinct mood of his own later years and an element in his asceticism, is hardly the predominant disposition of the social and political writings.

A reading of Rousseau's other major essay on the theater, the *Preface to Narcisse*, suggests that the ambivalence about imagination evident elsewhere in his corpus is reflected even in his critical account of the theater. The problem of the *Preface* is twofold. As criticism it addresses the question of the role of theater in a metropolis that is already corrupt; as autobiographical self-justification, it explains the apparent inconsistency of the attack on the arts and sciences represented by the *First Discourse*, published a year before, and Rousseau's own involvement in the most corrupt of the arts by virtue of the successful stage production of *Narcisse*. The two strands of argument are, in a fashion typical of Rousseau's effort to integrate his life and his thought, twisted into a single cable that does as much to hold up theater as the *Letter to D'Alembert* did to bury it.

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In small republics such as Geneva, in the name of whose unspoiled virtue Rousseau composed the *Letter to D'Alembert*, the corruptions of the civilized imagination might still be resisted. But in capital cities like Paris where theater is already well established and vice no longer requires the aid of drama to corrupt an entire people, the situation is quite different. Even in the *Letter to D'Alembert*, Rousseau had admitted that just as when a people is good then the theater is bad for it, so "when the people is corrupted, the theater is good for it," at least in the sense that "drama will not harm us if nothing at all can harm us any more."

The discussion in the *Preface to Narcisse* moves beyond this cynicism, suggesting an ameliorative role for drama in cities already in a condition of advanced civilization, and thus advanced decay. The principle underlying Rousseau's approach is paradoxical in exactly the sense that the problem itself is paradoxical: if the faculty which, in making us human and capable of virtue, destroys our innocence and makes us vicious, then that same faculty may contain its own remedy. "The same causes which have corrupted nations," Rousseau observes in the *Preface to Narcisse*, "may sometimes serve to deter a still greater corruption, just as someone whose health has been damaged by an imprudent use of medicine may nevertheless be compelled to have recourse to the medics to save himself." In contrast to the *Letter to D'Alembert*, the spirit of the *Preface* is unreservedly prudent and relativistic, displaying an almost Montesquieuan sensibility. The arts and sciences, pilloried a year earlier in the *First Discourse*, are here given a kind of back-handed support. Those interested in virtue are entreated to "leave in existence, indeed, even to nourish with concern, the academies, colleges, universities, libraries, entertainments and all the other amusements which are capable of diverting men from their wickedness and preventing them from occupying their idleness with still more dangerous things. For in a country where there can no longer be any question of honest people, of morals or manners, it may well be better to live with knaves than with brigands." What serves as pernicious distraction from duty in a republic may become useful diversion from evil-doing in corrupt cities. "It is not a matter of prompting people to do good," Rousseau remonstrates, "but solely of distracting them from doing ill . . . if they cannot be preached at [which is the lesson of the *Letter to D'Alembert*] they must be entertained." Perhaps theater cannot instruct if it is forced first to amuse, but even amusement may have certain ameliorative side effects in a society devoted to more active vices. Paralyzing public action when the actors in the public arena are thieves is quite a different matter from paralyzing public action when the actors are citizens. We may well be grateful for diversions that render murderers idle.

Rousseau's relativism—his sociological realism—allow him to view drama as a bane in republican Geneva before the fall, but as a necessary and lesser evil in metropolitan Paris after the fall; there the choices are in any case exclusively between evil and lesser evil (which is virtue of a sort). Unfortunately, because he was persuaded that the theater was immune to truly constructive uses of imagination, Rousseau himself despaired of developing a systematic theory of the drama consistent with his relativistic conviction that in corrupt societies the mere affirmation of innocence was futile and irrelevant. He did entertain the notion of writing a true moral tragedy of quite a different order than the whimsical court comedies he had written earlier, and he actually commenced work on

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a serious play entitled *The Death of Lucretia*. He also spent fourteen pages in the *Letter to D'Alembert* suggesting rewrites that might make Molière's *Misanthrope* a more instructive drama and its principal character Alceste (a remarkable likeness of Rousseau) a more noble and less ridiculous figure. But finally his analysis of the structure of dramatic affect left little room for anything but the cynical uses of theater as a diversion he hinted at in the *Preface to Narcisse*. Although his other literary works held clues to edifying uses of the literary imagination, and although he inspired in later generations, particularly among the German pre-Romantics and Romantics, a tradition of literary moralizing associated with the *Bildungsroman* and the modern morality play (see, for example, Lessing's *Nathan der Weise* or Goethe's *Faust*), he remained quite persuaded that the drama was the least promising of the arts. Whether or not Ibsen or Chekhov or Zola or Brecht or Lukács or Peter Brook have proved him wrong (and the matter remains controversial, anything but settled), Rousseau's technical analysis of theater's deficiencies as an instrument of moral reason and social reform is a powerful one.

Nonetheless, it is not decisive with respect to the problem of imagination, because the larger dilemma is not technical or pertinent exclusively to the problem of drama, but reflects the paradoxical role of imagination in the progress, or retrogress, of the species.

The Paradox of Imagination and the Paradox of Modernity

Rousseau's critique of the theater rests on the paradox which makes the civilizing imagination the source of all our errors and vices. At the same time—here the paradox is inverted—the imagination by virtue of which we pervert our innocence and deprave our natural simplicity is also the faculty by virtue of which we overcome our perversity and transform our nature. There are at least three major facets of Rousseau's thought in which imagination is implicated in affirmative, progressive ways. First, it is apparently presupposed as a necessary ingredient in the natural sentiments upon which virtue rests, in the sentiment or instinct Rousseau calls compassion (*pitié*). Second, it figures powerfully in Rousseau's portrait of the conditions of dependency which link the ideal of natural independence to the actuality of social bondage. And third, it is central to the idea of disinterestedness which in its mature form as depicted in the *Social Contract* constitutes the basis for social harmony and provides the conditions under which free and independent beings become cooperative and morally competent citizens.

Pity or compassion (along with simple self-love) is the natural sentiment that defines human beings as potentially moral and gives to their simple, premoral actions an aspect of innocent benevolence. Rousseau underscores the natural and instinctive quality of this sentiment in all of his moral writings, above all, in the *Emile*. Although he expresses it less explicitly, what is remarkable about his concept of pity is that it is the first and perhaps most significant act of the human imagination—the act by which, once simple self-love (*amour de soi*) enables us to care for ourselves, we are able to care for others, to experience a "feeling which puts us in the place of the sufferer," of other humans we can identify with the self for which we care. This extraordinary imaginative feat, by

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which we leap out of ourselves and into others, inspires all systems of morality and is at the heart of that paradigmatic moral principle, the golden rule. Although Rousseau often speaks of natural pity as if it were prior to reason and to imagination—prior to all those faculties which later define us as human—it seems clear that pity depends crucially on the imagination and is not conceivable in its absence. Rousseau condemns the imagination for its follies in leading us to compare ourselves to others and thus transform natural *amour de soi* into vain *amour-propre;* yet it is the ability to compare ourselves to others that renders us compassionate and disposes us to morality in the first place. (From compassion, Rousseau notes in the *Second Discourse* "alone flow all the social virtues . . . what is generosity, clemency, or humanity but compassion applied to the weak, to the guilty, or to mankind in general?")

This primary role of imagination in the natural sentiment of compassion is directly related to its secondary role in explaining our dependency. Despite the idealization of independence, Rousseau never ceases to believe that the actual condition of the human species is dependency, a reality both reflected in and reenforced by imagination, as the *Emile* again makes clear: "Our common sufferings draw our hearts to our fellow-creatures . . . every affection is a sign of insufficiency . . . so our frail happiness has roots in our weakness . . . if our common needs create a bond of interest, our common sufferings create a bond of affection . . . imagination puts us in place of the other." The imaginative leap that carries us into others also binds us to them; in their suffering we perceive our own needs, in our weakness we grasp our dependency on them. It is not that imagination makes us dependent. Our needs do that. But imagination permits us to see and feel that dependency in ways that endow us with our peculiarly human traits: our mercy, our sense of fellowship, our cooperativeness, and our disposition to morality (which is nothing more than a rational elaboration of our mutualism, a legitimation of our dependency).

Third, and last, the imagination plays a crucial role in those prudent social institutions Rousseau designs in the *Social Contract* to legitimize the chains which, though men may be "born free," inevitably define their actual condition —they are "everywhere in chains." *The Social Contract* does not aspire to retrieve man's natural innocence or even to salvage his natural liberty. On the contrary, the wise Legislator, "He who dares to undertake the making of a people's institutions ought to feel himself capable, so to speak, of changing human nature, of transforming each individual, who is by himself a complete and solitary whole, into a part of a greater whole . . . of altering man's constitution for the purpose of strengthening it: and of substituting a partial and moral existence for the physical and independent existence nature has conferred on us all." And if the Legislator does his work well, the individual whose natural liberty is lost will nonetheless "bless continually the happy moment which took him from (the state of nature) for ever, and, instead of a stupid and unimaginative animal, made him an intelligent being and a man." The creature safe from the ravages of the imagination is an animal; the human man must risk its perils, and hope to be metamorphosized by its powers into a noble and virtuous citizen.

Even in the *Emile,* Rousseau recognizes the moral promise implicit in the capacity to project the self via the imagination into others: "Extend *amour-propre* to others and it is transformed into a virtue which has its roots in the heart of

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every one of us . . . the more general the interest becomes the juster it is." The paradox turns on itself twice: *amour-propre* is the vice that issues from the corruption of innocence, of simple *amour de soi*—vanity from self-love—but extend the vice, enlarge the compass of vanity, and it becomes the higher virtue of disinterestedness. One of the purposes of the *Social Contract* is to provide conditions under which self-interested beings can act disinterestedly and thus virtuously in a fashion that curbs their private interests without compromising their natural self-love (*amour de soi*). In this light, the General Will may be understood as a device which, in embodying the principle of rational disinterestedness, rediscovers and gives social force to the natural powers of compassion (right instinct).

If imagination remains the key to the Legislator's craft and to the capacity for self-transformation of human beings who are living in an era after Eden, when their innocence is irretrievable, it is also the key to Rousseau's own personal life dilemma. Although the transformation it catalyzes in him is personal and solitary rather than public and social, its effect is no less pronounced. As he makes clear throughout his autobiographical writings, as the persecuting world in which he lived closed in on him with an animosity more real than any paranoia with which he might have responded to it, he found increasing solace in imaginative reveries of his own making. This is Rousseau the romantic who wrote the most stunningly imaginative novel of his century, Rousseau the solitary walker "transported on the wings of imagination," in the Fifth Promenade, into dreams more real, certainly more consoling, than reality, Rousseau the creator of a "golden age" of his own "fancy," as he put it to Malesherbe in the well-known letter of January 26, 1762. In his life as well as in his work, imagination is its own worst enemy, its own best hope.

Here then is the paradox, and it is a paradox of modernity no less than a paradox of the Rousseauan imagination. Rousseau cannot be said to have resolved it in his critique of the drama, ultimately for technical reasons that lie in the character of drama rather than in imagination itself. Nonetheless, he did understand its consequences for the dilemmas of the human condition. If in progress is to be found the source of our ruin, so in ruination can be found the promise of our salvation. Since we are progressive or developmental animals by nature, endowed with the natural faculty of self-improvement, and thus by nature fated to corruption, we are also by nature capable of a transforming salvation and of a saving virtue. This is what may be called, in keeping with his inclination to eschatological language of a decidedly Christian variety, Rousseau's solution to the problem of secular theodicy: the origin of injustice and vice in a world where natural men are naturally innocent and naturally predisposed to virtue (by compassion). Although the *Discourses* appear to exonerate man and charge society itself with the responsibility for human corruption, the paradox of the imagination suggests that nature itself—the natural faculty of imagination—is at fault. In the profession of faith of the Savoyard Vicar that is the moral centerpiece of the *Emile*, Rousseau is unequivocal: "O Man! Seek no further for the author of evil: thou art he. There is no evil but the evil you do or the evil you suffer, and both come from yourself."

For all his fulsome praise of innocence and simplicity, Rousseau knows well enough that God could not have "given the prize of well-doing to one who was

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incapable of evil" and that to merit that prize, freedom, reason, and the imagination had to be exercised, even at the risk of perdition. For all his praise of ignorance, he knows that to be human is to know; and so he puts on the lips of his Savoyard Vicar the question, "to prevent a man from wickedness, should Providence have restricted him to instinct and made him a fool?" And he gives to the vicar this answer: "Not so, O God of my soul, I will never reproach thee that thou has created me in thine own image, that I may be free and good and happy like my Maker!" Even if in doing so man is made vulnerable to slavery, vice and misery. There is the dilemma.

A great deal of confusion has arisen as a result of the failure among both romantic pessimist and romantic revolutionary interpreters of Rousseau to appreciate the paradoxical and deeply Christian (Calvinist) tension in his definition of human nature. The confusion stems in part from Rousseau's occasional (and largely futile) attempts to evade the tension himself by promulgating what may be understood as the Eden Ideal: human nature defined by innocence, ignorance, independence, simplicity, and solitude. This ideal, though at odds with the central paradoxes of Rousseau's thought and incompatible even with his vision of the romantic solitary possessed by imagination, has nevertheless been taken as at least one pole of his theory of human nature. Yet the Eden Ideal is a historical and logical impossibility, entailing an understanding of "human nature" that voids "nature" of everything "human." Rousseau consistently rejects the implication, even where it is an implication of his own misleading idealization of Eden, that man can be anything but man, that he can ever go back and "live among the bears" (*Appendix to the Second Discourse*), that "the argument drawn from the example of the beast" can ever prove anything about man, since "man is not a dog or a wolf" (*Letter to D'Alembert*).

Consequently, although the Eden Ideal suggests men are by nature innocent, they cannot be and are not by nature innocent because they are by nature free; and possessing choice, they are responsible for their acts and so open to approbation or opprobrium. The Eden Ideal suggests men are naturally ignorant ("the more we know, the more mistakes we make; therefore ignorance is the only way to escape error" [*Emile*]), but they cannot be and are not by nature ignorant, because they are endowed with a reason and curiosity that define them as men rather than animals. The point of Rousseau's paean to ignorance cannot then be that we must become ignorant to escape error, but that error is inevitable and must be the starting point for all education and political and moral transformation. The Eden Ideal suggests men are by nature independent, free only inasmuch as they do not need one another. But men cannot be and are not by nature independent, because their natural weaknesses and their natural needs throw them into one another's arms. Hence, the point cannot be that we must become independent in order to be free, but that meaningful freedom (moral and civic freedom) can arise only out of a legitimation of dependency (the project of the *Social Contract*). The Eden Ideal suggests men are by nature simple and unimaginative, but their condition is such that they cannot be and are not by nature unimaginative because to be human is to be self-improving. The point cannot be that we must become fools by uprooting our imagination, but that we must find ways to use our imagination in liberating ourselves from its corruptions. The Eden Ideal suggests men are by nature

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solitary, but their condition is such that they cannot be and are not by nature solitary because by nature "man's weaknesses make him sociable. Our common sufferings draw our hearts to our fellow-creatures" (the *Emile*); and if "a really happy man is a hermit," the point is "only God enjoys happiness" whereas men are fated to suffering for which the only compensation may be the possibility of virtue.

In short, the Eden Ideal is neither an alternative nor even an ideal type against which human progress can be measured. It is a dialectical reminder of what man cannot be, and of the costs of what he is. It is here that Rousseau's modernity is to be found—in a paradoxical portrait of human nature, *his* nature, that is at once both a song of jubilation and a threnody. We are lost in the world not by chance or accident or providence but because we are men; and the faculties by which we have lost our way alone hold the promise of our redemption. The stark polarities are missing, the transcendental culpability of the Gods has vanished: alone in the world, we make or unmake our own destinies, relying for succor on fellow-creatures as likely to enslave as to liberate us and on an imaginative faculty as likely to corrupt as to ennoble us. Yet if we are trapped in our chains, those chains can be legitimized; if dependent on our brothers and sisters, that dependency can be made mutual and rewarding; if defined by a morally ambivalent faculty of imagination, we can put it to the inventive tasks of transforming and ennobling our nature and thereby become "partakers in the happiness and perfection of celestial intelligences" (*Appendix to the Second Discourse*).

It is not the sadness of Rousseau's life and the promise of his work—the promise of his life and the sadness of his work—that make him our peer. His modernity lies rather in the powerful linkage that makes his sadness and his promise part of a single imaginative vision of the human condition—a vision in which sadness holds the promise of an ambiguous hope, and hope is tainted with an inevitable and all too human sadness.

References

[1]This discussion grows in part out of a particular interpretation of Rousseau's work in the theater developed in my "Rousseau and the Tragic Imagination," in M. McGrath, ed., *Artistic Vision and Public Action: Essays on the Drama of Modern Political Theory* (New York: Marcel Dekker, 1978). Where they were available I have used standard translations: the Everyman edition of the *Emile* and the *Social Contract and Discourses*, and Allan Bloom's translation of the *Letter to D'Alembert on Theater* in *Politics and the Arts* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1960). Page references and other bibliographical data are omitted because my intentions are solely interpretative and do not depend on any special scholarly apparatus or on esoteric resources.

[2]Passages from the *Preface to Narcisse* are from a new translation by myself and Janis Forman which will appear in *Political Theory*, 6 (4) November 1978, a special issue devoted exclusively to Rousseau.

[3]Passages from the *Reveries of a Solitary Walker* and from other works are my own translation, and are based on the text of the Pléiade edition of Rousseau's work: *Oeuvres complètes de Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, ed. Bernard Gagnebin and Marcel Raymond, 4 vols. (Paris: Gallimard, 1959–1969, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade).

[4]Readers interested in the themes of theater and imagination in Rousseau may also want to consult Marshall Berman, *The Politics of Authenticity* (New York: Atheneum, 1970); Jean Starobinski, *J.-J. Rousseau: La transparence et l'obstacle*, (Paris: Gallimard, 1971); Judith N. Shklar, *Men and Citizens*, (Cambridge, England: The University Press, 1969); M. Barras, *The Stage Controversy in France from Corneille to Rousseau*, (New York: Institute of French Studies, 1933); and Margaret M. Moffat, *Rousseau et la Querelle du Théatre au XVIIIe Siècle*, (Paris, 1930). Volume 2 of the Pléiade edition of Rousseau contains texts of all of Rousseau's plays and operettas.

[5]The most successful of the operettas, "*Le Devin du Village*," found its way into the repertoire of the Paris Opera and can still be heard in recordings.

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ROGER D. MASTERS

Jean-Jacques Is Alive and Well: Rousseau and Contemporary Sociobiology

I

JEAN-JACQUES ROUSSEAU: the personality as well as his ideas are still to be conjured with two hundred years after the man breathed his last at Ermenonville on July 2, 1778. Of the main figures of the eighteenth century, we are interested by Diderot, amused by Voltaire, and instructed by Hume. But we are confronted, and hence involved more personally, by Rousseau. Why should this be?

In the first century after his death, Rousseau was the subject of violent polemics. By 1878, however, Henri-Fréderic Amiel was able to present one of the most balanced and thoughtful assessments ever written. Indeed, Amiel's statement of the "colossal" influence of Rousseau is so apt that it deserves to be quoted at length:

> Rousseau was the apostle of a new ideal. His cry: "Return to Nature!" produced a revolution in every sphere of private and public life . . . Rousseau was the prophet of a new order of things and a new society . . . Rousseau opened the way to the serious discussion and philosophical examination of Christianity . . . Rousseau was the reformer of the science of teaching . . . He is an ancestor, he is even our chief ancestor. To convince oneself of this one has only to unite in a single cluster the innumerable lines that derive from him.
>
> He has furnished the model of all the types of eloquence . . . Not to speak of his activity in connection with French dramatic music, he discovered as a writer any number of new veins . . . A satirist called Socrates the enchanter of Greece: Jean-Jacques, that other enchanter, has succeeded in inoculating even our generation with his most peculiar preferences: the joys of the open field, the solitary walk, botanizing; he invented, as it were, the walking expedition and mountain-climbing . . . Literary botany and musical aesthetics date from him. Rousseau is the father of romanticism. Temperate realism and its opposite sentimentalism spring equally from the dreamer of Les Charmettes . . .
>
> With respect to ideas properly so called, almost all those of Rousseau have germinated after him; they have blossomed about us, and it is probable that of all the great innovators of the last century it is Rousseau who would find himself the least among strangers in our existing society.[1]

Although Amiel noted that, "by the second centenary it will not be so difficult to be just,"[2] it is remarkable that Rousseau's extraordinary impact on modern thought could be so concisely summarized a hundred years ago.

Rousseau is indeed an "ancestor"—and it may not be too much to say, with Amiel, "our chief ancestor." Could one not argue that Marx, the patron saint of

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an ideology ruling one-third of the world's population, merely radicalized the eloquent condemnation of property in the *Second Discourse*? Or that Kant's influence on modern ethics arose from his transformation of Rousseau's "general will" into the "categorical imperative"?

The counterculture can see, in the flight of Jean-Jacques from the salons of Paris, a prototype of their rejection of twentieth-century industrialization. The elite of developing countries can read, in Rousseau's *Social Contract*, a recipe for uniting diverse ethnic groups into a coherent new society. The writer can feel, in the poetry of the *Rêveries*, a source of contemporary techniques ranging from stream of consciousness to the journalistic novel.

Within academia, Rousseau's insistence that society is not "natural" to our species has had a continuing effect on the study of human life. By arguing that the "state of nature" is not only prior to civilization, but that human beings were originally isolated and stupid animals, Rousseau challenged succeeding generations to see political institutions as the product of historical evolution. As a result, he has been viewed as a founder of modern anthropology and sociology as well as one of the "classic" political philosophers.[3]

Since Amiel's overall judgment remains so surprisingly relevant, perhaps there is little need to say more. But on one score at least, Rousseau has an additional claim to our attention. His genius lies not only in historical influence on a bewildering variety of disciplines and artistic forms, from opera to autobiography. Jean-Jacques Rousseau is also our contemporary in a more direct sense. But since this can easily seem to be mere metaphor or hyperbole, a concrete example is in order.

II

It has become the fashion to relegate philosophers to a field called the history of ideas. Rousseau, however, is a teacher whose lessons cannot be narrowly confined within a single department. If I may be pardoned for speaking in the first person singular—and Jean-Jacques surely would, since he did so fifteen times in the first seven sentences of the *Confessions*—Rousseau's influence on my own research provides a striking instance of how alive he is today.

My academic research began conventionally enough. A doctoral dissertation under the late Leo Strauss at Chicago challenged one to examine a serious thinker's ideas with infinite care. For reasons which now escape me, my choice was Rousseau. Perhaps it resulted from my ignorance of both classical languages and German—leaving only French as a foreign language in which I could study the original. I could not even exclude such trivial grounds as the desire to spend a year in Paris.

No matter. Once begun, the study of Rousseau's political thought engaged my attention well after the completion of a doctorate. Struck by editions which did little justice to Rousseau's precise thought and powerful rhetoric, my wife and I translated the *First and Second Discourses;* as soon as a year's leave permitted, the dissertation was thoroughly reworked into publishable form.

But there it could all have ended. Being convinced that fascination with a single thinker can be overly narrow, I had ventured into the area of international politics; building on work as a graduate student, I dabbled in the field of political anthropology; on occasion, there were even chances to try my hand at jour-

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nalism. None of these directions seemed to derive directly from my long study of Rousseau, though of course all had been enriched thereby.

As it happened, however, these divergent areas did not persistently hold my interest. The reason? At the moment of completing my commentary on Rousseau's political thought, a friend suggested that I read Robert Ardrey's *African Genesis.* Being on leave, I had time to read the book (if only to discuss a manuscript that my friend was writing). Slowly, I began to realize that the questions raised in the *Second Discourse* were not merely philosophic matters of the highest importance, though of course they are that. I saw that the issues with which Rousseau had wrestled remain *the* questions of evolutionary biology, ethology, and human anthropology.

C. P. Snow popularized the notion of the "two cultures." Fortunately, Rousseau never read Snow, nor did he have to get tenure in a single academic department. Hence Jean-Jacques, supposedly a sensitive man of letters, cited the best scientific data available to him: Buffon's *Natural History;* travelers' reports on the orangutan and chimpanzee; eye-witness' accounts of primitive tribes both in South Africa and America. More important, Rousseau asked the right questions—so much so that biologists, ethologists, and anthropologists are still dealing with them.

The *Second Discourse* was written a century before Darwin's *Origin of Species,* yet Rousseau already took a resolutely evolutionary view toward human nature. Two hundred years before students of animal behavior, trained by Carpenter, Lorenz, and Tinbergen, brought us extensive studies of our primate relatives, Rousseau focused on the behavior of these species as a clue to our own origins. And long before a generation of anthropologists brought back truly careful accounts of preliterate or "savage" societies, Rousseau insisted that they fully deserve the name "human."

There is no way around the evidence. The debates about all manner of political and scientific questions today require an adequate understanding of human nature. As Rousseau puts it, this is "the most useful and least advanced of all human knowledge" because we have evolved and changed over millennia.[4] In order to judge whether Rousseau's own conclusions make sense, therefore, I had to go beyond a reading of his texts. I even had to go beyond the study of the great thinkers in the history of ideas. To take seriously the questions that Rousseau asked me to ponder, I had to study contemporary biology, ethology, and evolutionary anthropology. In short, Rousseau demanded that I cross the bridge between Snow's two cultures.

Over the last decade, I've therefore tried to digest enough of these apparently foreign fields to make sense of recent research. The adequacy of this attempt is not the point. Rather, my experience is evidence that Rousseau continues to be very much alive, demanding that we push beyond the artificial divisions between academic fields. Jean-Jacques was not just a humanist—he was a scientist as well.

III

To see how far Rousseau's thought is still relevant, his theory of human nature must therefore be reconsidered in the light of the latest scientific research. To be sure, not all of his answers have withstood the test of time. But to

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determine where he was "wrong," let us turn to the *Second Discourse* and, instead of reading it merely as a statement of Rousseau's ideas, reconsider the connections between the text and contemporary biological science.

It is often said that a great thinker is one who asks the right questions. His answers may not be entirely acceptable, but his questions must be perennial and relevant from age to age. In seeking a truly scientific understanding of "natural man," Rousseau was perfectly aware of this limitation: "Let my readers not imagine, therefore, that I dare flatter myself with having seen what appears to me so difficult to see. I began some lines of reasoning, I ventured some conjectures, less in the hope of resolving the question than with the intention of clarifying it and reducing it to its true state."[5] Like a contemporary scientist, therefore, Rousseau begins from a sense of skepticism toward *all* definitions of human nature based solely on traditional authority, religion, or custom.[6]

The difficulty of his question, moreover, arises from the need to take a rigorously evolutionary attitude toward human origins. Rousseau thus begins by restating the Socratic injunction, "Know Thyself," in radically historical terms: "And how will man manage to see himself as nature formed him, through all the changes that the sequence of time and things must have produced in his original constitution, and to separate what he gets from his own stock from what circumstances and his progress have added to or changed in his primitive state?"[7] It hardly needs to be added that the relevance of this issue is demonstrated by the continuing nature/nurture controversy, notably with regard to such issues as the innate versus cultural origins of aggressiveness, territorial behavior, altruism, and the like.[8]

Rousseau's fundamentally evolutionary approach deserves particular emphasis. Describing the origin of our species long before Darwin, Rousseau insists on natural selection or, to use that much misunderstood concept, the "survival of the fittest": "considering [man], in a word, as he must have come from the hands of nature . . . Children, bringing into the world the excellent constitution of their fathers and fortifying it with the same training that produced it, thus acquire all the vigor of which the human species is capable. Nature treats them precisely as the law of Sparta treated the children of citizens: it renders strong and robust those who are well constituted and makes all the others perish . . ."[9] To be sure, contemporary biologists have replaced the notion of survival of the fittest with "survival of the fit" or, in more technical terms, "inclusive fitness"; now, it has been shown, natural selection favors those individuals whose genes are transmitted to coming generations with the greatest frequency.[10]

It is in this context that Rousseau's objective in the *Second Discourse* becomes entirely clear. Replacing the biblical account of man's creation and fall with a more scientific "hypothesis" or "conjecture," Rousseau begins from the assumption that our ancestors were able to subsist in a "natural" environment. It follows that humans must be descended from an ancestral species which evolved bipedal stature[11] before the acquisition of verbal speech[12] or what we call civilization.[13] As any text in evolutionary anthropology will attest, several generations of research have more than confirmed Rousseau's point. Whatever the disagreements among experts, there is no longer a concern about the missing link: apart from theological doctrine, the evolutionary perspective is now generally accepted as scientifically demonstrated.[14]

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Rousseau's insight, however, is not limited to such generalities. Quite the contrary, for he saw that one of the keys to human nature is that "infancy is longer among us"[15]; to use the technical term of today's biologists, our species is characterized by "neoteny," or the prolongation of gestational or infantile traits into later stages of the life cycle.[16] Granting the vulnerability of such relatively helpless infants, moreover, Rousseau stresses the importance of the maternal bond as a means of assuring the survival of the young[17]; once again, contemporary research on primates as well as humans has reinforced the essential accuracy of Rousseau's insight.[18] Finally—but perhaps most important of all—Rousseau insists on the need to seek the evolutionary origins of speech, since we cannot assume that our primate ancestors spoke as humans now do.[19]

For Rousseau, this evolutionary perspective makes possible a radical critique of the traditional view of man as a rational being: "these are the fatal proofs that most of our ills are our own work, and that we would have avoided almost all of them by preserving the simple, uniform, and solitary way of life prescribed to us by nature. If nature destined us to be healthy, I almost dare affirm that the state of reflection is a state contrary to nature and the man who meditates is a depraved animal."[20] Attacking the concepts of progress and the beneficence of civilization, Rousseau thus proclaims that "man is naturally good,"[21] meaning that man does not uselessly or maliciously attack others.

A major element in Rousseau's famous thesis concerns the solitary nature of early man. This picture of the state of nature implies that original humans lived alone, without permanent families, male–female bonds, or settled homesites (not to mention the amenities of civilization): "Let us conclude that wandering in the forests, without industry, without speech, without domicile, without war and without liaisons, with no need of his fellow-men, likewise with no desire to harm them, perhaps never even recognizing anyone individually, savage man, subject to few passions and self-sufficient, had only the sentiments and intellect suited to that state . . ."[22] At this point, one is tempted to dismiss Rousseau as a romantic individualist whose view of isolated individuals suits a *promeneur solitaire* but is quite irrelevant to human evolution.

True, contemporary natural scientists are virtually unanimous in rejecting Rousseau's image of solitary man in the pure state of nature. But the issue that he thereby raised remains very real. And, indeed, it is not even clear that Rousseau himself held to the radical individualism of Part 1 of the *Second Discourse*: elsewhere, not only in the *Social Contract* and *Emile*, but even in the *Essay on the Origin of Languages* (perhaps contemporary with the *Second Discourse*), Rousseau treats the family group as "natural."[23] The essential point, therefore, may lie elsewhere.

To understand both Rousseau's intention in the *Second Discourse* and his continuing relevance, we are perhaps well advised to begin by defining what the "state of nature" is *not*. According to Rousseau, the original human condition is *not* one of civilization. The earliest humans were *not* governed by a formal legal system, because such laws presuppose speech—and we cannot take speech for granted. Our ancestors were *not* dependent on a highly evolved technology. The traditional view of human sociability and rationality must therefore refer to a later stage of human evolution, not our original condition.

This negative finding leads Rousseau to raise a range of problems which, before his time, were perceived dimly if at all. Apart from bipedal stature,

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which can no longer be merely assumed to be natural,[24] a wide range of human traits must be reanalyzed in evolutionary terms. Poor health,[25] lack of physical prowess,[26] and rational calculation[27] are all, for example, to be attributed to civilized life rather than to human nature as such. One could, of course, find echoes of such concerns in recent criticism of the modern way of life by writers like E. F. Schumacher and Ivan Illich.

The central problem, however, remains the origin of society. Contemporary sociobiologists and anthropologists are increasingly convinced that early hominids were hunters. According to one widely credited account, our ancestors evolved from herbivorous primates under the pressure of climactic changes which caused African forests to be replaced with savannah. In this view, *Homo sapiens* is the descendent of the small "man-apes" or australopithecines who emerged as social hunters at least three and one-half million years ago. In this sense, humans are a far more social species than Rousseau recognized. Indeed, as I have suggested elsewhere, our large brains may be the *result* of cooperation among early hominids and hence a *social* organ in the most precise sense of the word.[28]

Let us recall, however, that what is living in Rousseau are his questions. It would be unfair to criticize him for not knowing, in advance, the findings of two centuries of scientists; forced to rely on unreliable reports of travelers, Rousseau demanded scientific research on human origins more insistently than almost any other eighteenth-century thinker.[29] Setting aside Rousseau's attempted description of the state of nature, therefore, what do we learn from the issues that he raised by speaking of man as naturally "solitary" and "good"?

First, Rousseau insisted that the environmental setting of earliest human ancestors must be the starting point of any reconstruction of our origins. For Rousseau, these origins took place in an environment of plenty.[30] Although contemporary evolutionary theory stresses the importance of climactic change and the transition to the savannah, Rousseau could reply that prior to this shift by the australopithecines, hominid ancestors did indeed live in relative plenty.

Second, Rousseau linked this environmental setting (or, to use the technical term, ecological niche) to the dietary preferences of our ancestors. Here, Rousseau's own statements are curiously paradoxical. On the one hand, he stresses the evidence for a primarily herbivorous ancestor for our species[31]; on the other, he indicates that a carnivorous way of life would be more consistent with his own hypothesis of solitary individuals in the state of nature.[32] Beyond these paradoxes, it is evident that we are related to, and probably evolved from, primates that were herbivorous, but that hominids have long eaten meat. In short, Rousseau had already focused on the transition from a herbivorous to an omnivorous diet as a crucial element in the transition to a hominid way of life.[33]

Third, and perhaps most important, Rousseau related the environmental setting and dietary preferences of our ancestors to the relationships between males and females. Given the superficiality of most contemporary remarks on the "natural" status of male–female bonds, Rousseau's achievement in this regard is truly astounding. Indeed, it is only in the most recent period that sociobiologists have begun to go beyond generalities to specify the conditions which lead to various reproductive patterns of males and females among vertebrates.[34] A word, therefore, may be in order on this technical point.

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IV

For Rousseau, sexual intercourse between male and female need not generate a lasting bond akin to human marriage. As he put it, in criticizing Locke's assumption of a natural bond as the nucleus of the family:

> Mr. Locke evidently supposes what is in question; for it is not a matter of knowing why the man will remain attached to the woman after delivery, but why he will become attached to her after conception. His appetite satisfied, the man no longer needs a given woman, nor the woman a given man. The man has not the least concern nor perhaps the least idea of the consequences of his action. One goes off in one direction, the other in another, and there is no likelihood that at the end of nine months they have any memory of having known each other . . .[35]

In the perspective of contemporary sociobiology, this objection is quite correct: in many species, males do not form lasting bonds with females, and one can indeed talk of animals "wandering in the forests, without industry, without speech, without domicile, without war and without liaisons."[36]

To be sure, this way of life does *not* seem to have been followed by the australopithecines and their descendents, the genus *Homo*, of which we are the ubiquitous representatives. But other species have adopted such a social pattern. For example, among the marmots, woodchucks have been shown to live in a solitary way which greatly resembles Rousseau's pure state of nature (with the exception that aggressive behavior between isolated males is more frequent than Rousseau thought would have been the case for early humans).[37]

More relevant than woodchucks, however, are the wide variety of social structures found among other primates. If gibbons form pair bonds, chimpanzees do not; if hamadryas baboons form one-male "harems," male rhesus monkeys are content with short "consortships" with females in estrous. It follows that Rousseau's insistence on a scientific reexamination of the relationship between males and females opened a fundamental question, if not the fundamental question, underlying the traditional issue of human sociability.[38]

When Rousseau criticizes Locke, moreover, his logic remains valid as a method of approaching contemporary issues. For example, the lasting male–female bond has been explained as an evolutionary adaptation that makes possible prolonged infancy and therewith an increased variability of learned behavior. Such an approach to adaptive "advantage" is subject to Rousseau's caveat: "although it may be advantageous to the human species for the union between man and woman to be permanent, it does not follow that it was thus established by nature."[39] Hence, in assessing contemporary scientific disagreements on the evolutionary origins of human society, Rousseau's method of reasoning remains surprisingly up to date.[40]

We should recall, after all, that Rousseau does *not* rule out social interaction between early humans. Quite the contrary, for Rousseau's rejection of sociability refers to what we call human culture rather than to what a biologist would describe as social behavior:

> Whatever these origins [of language] may be, from the little care taken by nature to bring men together through mutual needs and to facilitate their use of speech, one at least sees how little it prepared their sociability, and how little it contributed to

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> everything men have done to establish social bonds. In fact, it is impossible to imagine why, in that primitive state, a man would sooner have need of another man than a monkey or a wolf of its fellow creature; nor, supposing this need, what motive could induce the other to provide for it, nor even, in this last case, how they could agree between them on the conditions.[41]

What Rousseau here rejects is the natural status of "social bonds" like legal contracts and socioeconomic or political inequality. When denying that society existed in the pure state of nature, Rousseau thus does not exclude the possibility of some forms of social interaction.

Because political theorists generally do not have his grasp of biology, conventional commentaries on the *Second Discourse* (including my own) may have done Rousseau an injustice in this regard. For Rousseau, it is quite possible that in the "primitive state" men would have a "need of another man" that is similar to that of "a monkey or a wolf of its fellow creature."[42] In Part 2 of the *Second Discourse*, when describing the possible evolution of man, Rousseau returns to the issue of cooperation in the state of nature, asserting that it was more frequent than conflict.[43]

At this stage, Rousseau introduces the example of a primitive hunt: "Was it a matter of catching a deer, everyone clearly felt that for this purpose he ought faithfully to keep his post; but if a hare happened to pass within reach of one of them, there can be no doubt that he pursued it without scruple, and that having obtained his prey, he cared very little about having caused his companions to miss theirs."[44] Contemporary hypotheses about early hominids do not fit this image of a loosely organized social group, in which an occasional hunt has not generated ritualized food sharing or closely coordinated hunting behavior. But Rousseau's picture does describe fairly well our relatives, the chimpanzees, who still live in forest environments where hunting is a supplement rather than a primary food supply.[45]

Rousseau's example of the nonobligatory hunt, during which the group's catch of a deer is foiled by one individual's chasing a hare, is thus not foolish. Although it probably doesn't apply to the stages of our evolution represented by *Homo erectus* or even *Australopithecus africanus*, it could well fit an earlier epoch of primate evolution. Hence it is not without interest to note that, immediately after describing this informal and ineffective hunt, Rousseau adds: "It is easy to understand that such intercourse did not require a language much more refined than that of crows or monkeys, which group together in approximately the same ways."[46] Rousseau's image of the state of nature need not refer to hominids at all, since it points behind the earliest australopithecines to the way of life that their ancestors shared with largely herbivorous primates.

Rousseau's genius thus led him to raise the question of how we are related to other living primates, notably the mandrill, the orangutan, and above all the chimpanzee. In the notes to the *Second Discourse*, Rousseau focuses on this problem even more explicitly than in the text, pointing to the poor quality of the existing reports as a limit on the conclusions which he could draw. With characteristic intellectual daring, Rousseau indicates, albeit in a subtle way, that one could imagine the experimental cross-breeding of humans and orangutans or chimpanzees in order to show whether or not they were really the same species.[47]

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Contemporary ethology and sociobiology are therefore the direct inheritors of Rousseau's bold attempt to replace traditional religious dogma with a scientific understanding of human origins. Today, for example, specialists continue to wonder about such issues as the extent of chimpanzees' linguistic competence, the role of intentionality in primate behavior, and the conditions under which altruism—or what Rousseau called "pity"—might be found. Like Rousseau, specialists are still asking such questions as why males form bonds with females, how food preferences are established, and when settled homesites are defended against intruders.

To be sure, Rousseau's answers are no longer satisfactory. But he would have been the first to leap with excitement on reading the studies of ethologists, zoologists, and sociobiologists. He would have been fascinated by the research of Jane van Lawick-Goodall or Vernon Reynolds on chimpanzees, of George Schaller on gorillas, or of Hans Kummer on baboons; he would have been intensely interested in the theoretical development of sociobiology by Edward Wilson, David Barash, or W. D. Hamilton; he would have been intrigued by the accounts of hominid evolution and the hunting way in the writings of Robin Fox, Glynn Isaac, or Richard Leakey.

It follows, of course, that Rousseau's own conclusions probably need some revision. But not his method. And with that method, Rousseau claimed that at least some of his conclusions could not be assailed. Let us conclude, therefore, by asking whether part of Rousseau's continuing relevance may be traced not merely to questions that remain very much alive, but even to a few answers that have stood up over the last two centuries.

V

Rousseau's image of the pure state of nature does not seem to describe a species that is recognizably human. The ecological adaptation and social structure, while plausible for a forest-dwelling and individually territorial animal (like some of the lemurs of Madagascar, who are the most primitive primates), does not seem likely for australopithecines, who lived some three and one-half million years ago, and still less probable for *Homo erectus* or other subsequent hominids. But this may be a more superficial conclusion than has generally been recognized.

First of all, Rousseau's celebrated thesis of man's natural goodness can be accepted in at least one form. Early humans do not seem to have been malicious or evil; our ancestors were hunters (like hyenas or lions), but even if they also killed each other (like some langurs), their behavior is to be explained by evolutionary biology rather than innate sinfulness. In this sense, Rousseau's thought stands as a demystification of human origins—and as an attempt to remove from our self-awareness the sense of theological guilt associated with original sin.

Second, Rousseau's pessimistic view of human history, at least since the discovery of agriculture, is a crucial qualification of his optimistic view of human nature. Whereas many have concluded that human perfectibility makes possible unlimited progress based on science, Rousseau doubted such beliefs even before the industrial revolution began. In the *First Discourse*, he argues that "our souls have been corrupted in proportion to the advancement of our sciences

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and arts toward perfection"[48]; in the *Second Discourse*, he proclaims more broadly that, after the epoch of "savage" society, "all subsequent progress has been in appearance so many steps toward the perfection of the individual, and in fact toward the decrepitude of the species."[49]

At first, we tend to reject Rousseau's fears as exaggerated. But, as two recent scholars have put it, "the 'agricultural revolution' . . . put the severest strains on the fine-honed hunting animal that we were (and still are)"; as a result, agriculture "was the great leap backward" rather than an unmixed blessing.[50] Even biologists who reject this view now admit that our species is in no way assured of continued progress.

If nothing else, the last two centuries have provided ample evidence that the extreme historical optimism of the enlightenment is a dangerous dream. Rousseau's warning that a total conquest of nature is impossible did not prevent him from proposing radical solutions to problems of social injustice. But his sober assessment of the limits of progress reminds us that such improvements can only be seen within the context of human evolution extending over "multitudes of centuries."[51]

Finally, if we push Rousseau's temporal horizon even farther into the background of hominid evolution, the fundamental questions of his *Second Discourse* turn out to be those of contemporary biology. But this means that to assess Rousseau as a student of human nature, we must study the natural sciences with care.

Rousseau's combination of intellectual daring and breadth of knowledge thus stands as a model of the obligations confronting today's natural scientists and philosophers. Particularly in an epoch when some technicians speak of cloning, genetic engineering, and the conscious control of evolution, serious thinkers can no longer enjoy the luxury of a division between the sciences.

Precisely because he was prepared to jettison popularly accepted belief in the search for scientific self-knowledge, all those who have continued in this same quest must sooner or later feel a deep kinship with Jean-Jacques. Yes, two centuries after his death, Jean-Jacques Rousseau is very much alive.

References

[1]Henri-Fréderic Amiel, *Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, trans. Van Wyck Brooks (New York: B. W. Heubsch, 1922), pp. 79–85.

[2]Ibid., p. 11.

[3]E.g., see Emile Durkheim, *Montesquieu et Rousseau* (Paris: Rivière, 1953); Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Le Totemisme aujourd'hui* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1962). Virtually every textbook survey of the history of political thought includes a summary of Rousseau's political teaching; hence none is provided here. Nor will any attempt be made to trace the development of his ideas, since Rousseau claimed that his major works formed a "system" inspired by the "Illumination of Vincennes" and revealed in the *First* and *Second Discourse*, *Emile*, and *Social Contract*. For a commentary on these works, see Roger D. Masters, *The Political Philosophy of Rousseau* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1968).

[4]*Discourse on the Origin of Inequality* [*Second Discourse*], Preface, in *Jean-Jacques Rousseau: First and Second Discourses*, ed. Roger D. Masters (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1964), p. 91. All subsequent references to the *Discourses* are to this edition.

[5]*Second Discourse*, Preface, p. 92.

[6]Ibid., Preface, pp. 93–97; Exordium, pp. 201–204.

[7]Ibid., Preface, p. 91.

[8]It is a grave mistake to presume that all scientists agree in their understanding of human nature. Some view aggression as a "natural" phenomenon; for example, see Konrad Lorenz, *On*

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Aggression (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, 1966); Robert Ardrey, *African Genesis* (New York: Atheneum, 1961); Hans Hass, *The Human Animal* (New York: Putnam, 1970). Others, however, insist on a "cultural" explanation of aggression; see Alexander Alland, Jr., *The Human Imperative* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1972); M. F. A. Montagu, ed., *Man and Aggression* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968). Similarly, on territoriality compare Robert Ardrey, *The Territorial Imperative* (New York: Atheneum, 1966) with Edward T. Hall, *The Hidden Dimension* (Garden City, N.Y.; Doubleday-Anchor, 1969). Altruism has been viewed as genetically determined or as an entirely cultural product; for both sides of the controversy, see Lauren Wispé, ed., *Altruism, Sympathy, and Helping* (New York: Academic Press, in press). From the perspective of modern biology, however, a radical dichotomy between "nature" and "nurture" is clearly inadequate and obsolete: see Roger D. Masters, "Politics as a Biological Phenomenon," *Social Science Information*, 14 (1975): 7–63.

[9]*Second Discourse*, Part 1, p. 106.

[10]On the difference between Darwin's concept of survival of the fittest, which seems close to that of Rousseau, and more recent interpretations, see Theodosius Dobzhansky, *Evolution, Genetics and Man* (New York: Wiley, 1955), p. 112; George Gaylord Simpson, *Mankind Evolving* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1967), pp. 221–224; and Edward O. Wilson, *Sociobiology* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1975), especially chaps. 4 and 5. For a popular, clear introduction to the concept of inclusive fitness, see also David Barash, "The New Synthesis," *Wilson Quarterly* (Summer 1972): 82–94. On the legitimacy of comparing humans with other animals, see Roger D. Masters, "Functional Approaches to Analogical Comparison between Species," in *Methods of Inference from Animal to Human Behavior*, ed. Mario von Cranach (The Hague: Mouton, 1976), pp. 73–102.

[11]*Second Discourse*, pp. 183–186, note c.

[12]Ibid., Part 1, pp. 117–127.

[13]Ibid., Part 2, pp. 142–155.

[14]For excellent examples of recent research, see Yves Coppens, F. Clark Howell, Glynn L. Isaac, and Richard E. F. Leakey, *Earliest Man in the Lake Rudolf Basin* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976); Richard E. Leakey and Roger Lewin, *Origins* (New York: Dutton, 1977). On the decisive role of bipedal stature in hominid evolution, see Charles F. Hockett and Robert Ascher's "The Human Revolution," in *Culture: Man's Adaptive Dimension*, ed. M. F. Ashley Montagu (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), especially pp. 29–34. Compare Sherwood Washburn's conclusion: "it was bipedalism which started man on his separate evolutionary career. But tool use was nearly as early" in "Tools and Evolution," in *The Evolution of Man's Capacity for Culture*, ed. J. N. Spuhler (Detroit, Mich.: Wayne State University Press, 1959), p. 31.

[15]*Second Discourse*, Part 1, p. 109.

[16]See M. F. Ashley Montagu, "Brains, Genes, Culture, Immaturity, and Gestation," in *Culture: Man's Adaptive Dimension*, ed. Montagu, pp. 102–113; Konrad Lorenz, "Psychology and Phylogeny," in *Studies in Animal and Human Behavior*, trans. Robert Martin, vol. 2 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1971), pp. 233–238. On the social preconditions for human neoteny, see reference 40.

[17]*Second Discourse*, Part 1, pp. 108–109, 112.

[18]For representative statements on the importance of the mother–infant bond, see the essays of Konner, Kaufman, and Hinde in *Ethology and Psychiatry*, ed. Norman F. White (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974), as well as the widely known work of Harry Harlow, John Bowlby, and Marshall Klaus. At the recent Werner Reimers Stiftung symposium entitled "Human Ethology: Claims and Limits of a New Discipline," a surprising number of papers touched on precisely this point: especially Hanuš and Mechthild Papoušek, "Early Ontogeny of Human Social Interaction"; William A. Mason, "Maternal Attributes and Primate Cognitive Development"; Colwyn Trevarthen, "Instincts for Human Understanding and for Cultural Cooperation"; and Judy Dunn, "Claims, Limitations and Possibilities: Ethology and the Study of Early Human Development" (all to appear in the proceedings of the conference, to be published by Cambridge University Press).

[19]*Second Discourse*, Part 1, pp. 120–126. In addition to Hockett and Ascher's "The Human Revolution," see Charles F. Hockett, "Animal 'Languages' and Human Language," in *Evolution of Man's Capacity for Culture*, ed. Spuhler, pp. 32–39, and Eric Lenneberg, "A Biological Perspective of Language," in *New Directions in the Study of Language*, ed. E. H. Lenneberg (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1964), pp. 65–88. At the Werner Reimers Stiftung Conference cited in note 18, a number of papers represent more recent work on this point: see especially Peter Marler, "Development of Auditory Perception in Relation to Vocal Behavior"; A. M. Liberman, "An Ethological Approach to Language through the Study of Speech Perception"; and David McNeill, "Language Origins." On the constitutive role of speech in human culture, see Roger D. Masters, "Genes, Language, and Evolution," *Semiotica*, 2 (1970): 295–320.

[20]*Second Discourse*, Part 1, p. 110.

[21]Ibid., p. 193, note i.

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[22]Ibid., Part 1, p. 137.

[23]See *Social Contract*, I, ii, ed. Roger D. Masters (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1978), p. 54; *Essay on the Origin of Languages*, trans. John H. Moran (New York: Ungar, 1966), chap. 9, pp. 31–33; *Emile*, book 5, ed. Garnier, p. 547. For an analysis of these passages, see Masters, *The Political Philosophy of Rousseau*, pp. 125–132.

[24]*Second Discourse*, pp. 183–186, note c.

[25]Ibid., Part 1, pp. 110–111; pp. 196–197, note i.

[26]Ibid., Part 1, pp. 106–107; pp. 188–191, note f. Cf. Aristotle, *Politics*, I. 1254a, trans. and ed. Ed Barker (New York: Oxford University Press, 1958), p. 13: "tame animals have a better nature than wild."

[27]*Second Discourse*, Part 1, pp. 115–117; pp. 203–213, note j.

[28]On the role of hunting in human evolution, see Robin Fox, "In the Beginning," *Man*, 2 (September, 1967): 415–433, as well as reference 14. For a popular statement, consult Robert Ardrey, *The Hunting Hypothesis* (New York: Atheneum, 1976). For the argument that the large human brain may be a "social organ," see Roger D. Masters, "Of Marmots and Men: Human Altruism and Animal Behavior," in *Altruism, Sympathy, and Helping*, ed. Wispé, chap. 3.

[29]*Second Discourse*, pp. 203–213, note j.

[30]Ibid., Part 1, p. 105; pp. 186–187, note d.

[31]Ibid., pp. 187–188, note e; pp. 191–192, note h.

[32]Ibid., pp. 216–217, note l.

[33]On the difficulties of Rousseau's treatment of primitive man's nourishment, see Masters, *Political Philosophy of Rousseau*, pp. 122–125. For more modern discussions of these points, compare George A. Bartholomew, Jr., and Joseph B. Birdsell, "Ecology and the Protohominids," in *Culture and the Evolution of Man*, ed. M. F. Ashley Montagu (New York: Oxford University Press, 1962), pp. 20–35; J. N. Spuhler, "Continuities and Discontinuities in Anthropoid-Hominid Behavioral Evolution: Bipedal Locomotion and Sexual Receptivity," paper presented at 75th Annual Meeting, American Anthropological Association (November, 1976). Spuhler's paper is especially important, suggesting that the year-round receptivity of the human female—and therewith the potentiality for lasting male–female bonds—are secondary consequences of the physical adaptation to bipedal hunting.

[34]See Wilson, *Sociobiology*, chap. 15; S. T. Emlen and L. W. Oring, "Ecology, Sexual Selection, and the Evolution of Mating Systems," *Science*, 197 (July 15, 1977): 215–223; Philip Thompson, "The Evolution of Territoriality and Society in Top Carnivores," *Social Science Information* (in press).

[35]*Second Discourse*, pp. 218–219, note l.

[36]Ibid., Part 1, p. 137.

[37]On woodchucks and related species, see David Barash, "The Evolution of Marmot Societies: A General Theory," *Science*, 185 August 2, 1974): 415–420. Some of the implications of Barash's work are spelled out in "Of Marmots and Men" (see reference in note 28).

[38]On primate structures see Irven DeVore, ed., *Primate Behavior* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1965); Vernon Reynolds, *The Apes* (New York: Harper and Row, 1967); Desmond Morris, ed., *Primate Ethology* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1969); Hans Kummer, *Primate Societies* (Chicago: Aldine-Atherton, 1971); Jane van Lawick-Goodall, *In the Shadow of Man* (New York: Dell, 1971). While most primates live in social groups of some kind, some lemurs are akin to the woodchucks and approximate Rousseau's pure state of nature: "*Lepilemur* seems to be solitary. They live in the forest in small 'population centers,' where the animals live in short distance from one another but remain continually separated (except, of course, for the mother and her young)." (Jean-Jacques Petter, "The Lemurs of Madagascar," in DeVore, *Primate Behavior*, p. 309.) Lemurs are generally described as the most "primitive" primates.

[39]*Second Discourse*, p. 216, note i.

[40]For the conventional argument that the male–female bond resulted from year-round sexual receptivity, itself a selective advantage because it facilitates longer child-care of the helpless neonate (and hence a more extensive role of individual learning), see Desmond Morris, *The Naked Ape* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967). Such formulations risk the mistake of concluding, from the presumed adaptive advantage of learning and behavioral plasticity, that male–female bonds evolved *because* they were advantageous. While hotly debated, ethological research usually reveals a more complex picture. For example, it has been argued that many behaviors related to male–female bonds among humans are transformations or ritualizations of earlier behaviors that originally had the function of tending the young or mating. See Wolfgang Wickler, *The Sexual Code* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday-Anchor, 1973), especially chaps. 28 and 34. If Wickler's argument is correct, then the temporal sequence implicit in the *Second Discourse* may well be valid, even if the stages must be pushed farther back in primate evolution. In any event, the development of such complex social patterns as year-round sexual receptivity, male–female bonding, extended neotony, the large brain and linguistic competence is likely to have been what Wilson calls an "autocatalytic" process, in which changes in one function triggered mutually reinforcing changes in the others: see Wilson, *Sociobiology*, pp. 565–

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574. For a reasonable, albeit unconventional, account of the role of hunting in this process, see the article by Spuhler cited in reference 33. While there is as yet no single view of human ethology which is generally accepted, the differences between mother–infant, male–female, and male–male bonds are usefully described in Lionel Tiger and Robin Fox, *The Imperial Animal* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1971), especially chaps. 3 and 4.

[41]*Second Discourse*, Part 1, pp. 126–127.

[42]Ibid., Part 1, p. 126.

[43]Ibid., Part 2, pp. 144–145.

[44]Ibid., Part 2, p. 145.

[45]Compare Jane and Hugo van Lawick-Goodall, *Innocent Killers* (New York: Ballantine, 1970) with discussions of chimpanzees cited in reference 38. For a recent statement of the hypothesis that food-sharing, hunting, and a division of labor have characterized the hominid way of life for at least two million years, see Glynn Isaac, "The Food-sharing Behavior of Protohuman Hominids," *Scientific American*, 238 (April 1978): 90–108.

[46]*Second Discourse*, Part 2, p. 145.

[47]Compare the question addressed to "the Aristotles and Plinys of Our Century" (*Second Discourse*, Preface, p. 93) with the "means by which, if the orangutan or others were of the human species, the crudest observers could even assure themselves of it by demonstration" (pp. 208–209, note j). Cross-breeding, of course, is not the only experimental evidence available to contemporary biologists, who are armed with far more sophisticated techniques of genetic analysis. For a recent example, see D. A. Miller, "Evolution of Primate Chromosomes," *Science*, 198 (December 16, 1977): 1116–1124.

[48]*First Discourse*, Part 1, p. 39.

[49]*Second Discourse*, Part 2, p. 151.

[50]Tiger and Fox, *The Imperial Animal*, p. 126.

[51]*Second Discourse*, Part 2, p. 141.

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ROBERT WOKLER

Perfectible Apes in Decadent Cultures: Rousseau's Anthropology Revisited[1]

I

THE DIFFUSION OF ROUSSEAU'S INFLUENCE over the past two centuries has been so wide and so substantial that hardly a subject or movement appears to have escaped his clutches. According to the old litany, he was responsible only for nationalism, romanticism, collectivism, and the French Revolution; now a good many of his admirers, and some of his critics too, inform us that psychiatry and structuralism are also derived largely from his writings; and in the past generation we have witnessed yet another monumental proclamation on his behalf—to the effect that he founded the science of anthropology. In his "extraordinarily modern view of the passage from nature to culture,"[2] Rousseau posed the central problem of that discipline, writes one of its most distinguished practitioners today, Claude Lévi-Strauss. By focusing upon both his own psychic state and character, on the one hand, and the behavior of savage peoples, on the other, he sought to define the inward and outward limits of mankind, not for the sake of ascertaining our origins but in order to establish the essence of humanity itself within these boundaries. He perceived the polarities between our animal and moral attributes, between our sentimental and rational traits, and in general between our natural and cultural patterns of behavior, along lines which have marked the development of the human sciences ever since and which, moreover, distinguish the perspective of the anthropologist, according to Lévi-Strauss, from the approaches of the moralist and the historian in their investigations of the affairs of men. Of course these general claims about the field will not command universal assent from their author's colleagues, and they may admit of several possible interpretations anyway; but at least there can be little doubt that the writings of Rousseau have exercised a profound influence upon the anthropology of Lévi-Strauss himself. For he has expounded this view of Rousseau's contribution not only in an article devoted specifically to the subject[3] and in the passage from *Le Totémisme aujourd'hui* which is cited here, but similarly at points throughout his major writings from *Tristes tropiques* to *L'Origine des manières de table*, where—in the last case—splendid citations from *Emile* are employed to introduce the theme of nearly every chapter.

Thus is introduced a whole new world in which the spread of Rousseauism has still to be traced, and the task confronting historians of ideas would already be sufficiently daunting, therefore, were it not for the fact that almost precisely

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the opposite interpretation of the significance of Rousseau's account of man has been even more recently propounded by Robert Ardrey—that archenemy of cultural anthropology in general. Ardrey dedicates one of his latest works, appropriately entitled *The Social Contract*, to the memory of Rousseau and praises the real modernity and "visionary" character of his thought because of its focus upon our roots in nature rather than our passage to culture. Rousseau "pondered over the way of the animal as of significance to the way of man"[4] and hence two centuries before the coming of ethology glimpsed a truth which is today willfully ignored by so-called social scientists—the truth that genetically established forms of behavior are manifest in human societal systems as well as in the societies of all other organisms.[5] What ought to be studied, according to Ardrey, are the relations between individuals that stem from the innate and universal attributes of animal life, whereas cultural anthropologists who detect a fundamental discontinuity between mankind and other zoological species are just impervious to the revolutionary ideas of Darwinism which have reverberated throughout all the life sciences apart from their own.

Now the gulf that separates Lévi-Strauss and Ardrey is in certain respects less wide than I have so far suggested, and my remarks require at least some qualification. For one thing, Lévi-Strauss has deliberately, if only slightly, modified his views about the distinction between nature and culture which he first exposited in detail in *Les Structures élémentaires de la parenté* in 1949, and in his more recent writings he has been as much concerned to stress the inseparability of culture from the nature of humanity in one sense as to point to the hiatus between them in another. Ardrey, for his part, has clearly altered his own views on Rousseau in the course of his career, for in his ethological writings both before and after *The Social Contract* he describes Rousseau's conception of man's original goodness (or the idea of the noble savage, on his account) as actually underlying what he takes to be the centrally false perspective of cultural anthropology,[6] and even in *The Social Contract* itself he seems to admire Rousseau's approach to the study of human nature only grudgingly and credits him more for the questions he posed than the solutions he provided.[7] So far as I know, Lévi-Strauss and Ardrey have never really addressed themselves directly to each other's views, either about anthropology in general or Rousseau in particular,[8] and it would in any case be a mistake to regard their respective claims as expressing a consensus of opinion that divides anthropologists and ethologists as a whole, since both figures (especially Ardrey, who has come to his subject as an amateur and popularizer relatively late in life) have their critics within their own disciplines as well as across them.

The chief principles that distinguish the work of the two men in their analyses of human nature remain, nevertheless, fundamental and decisive. If only in a general way, they even express the most striking dichotomies between the interests of cultural anthropologists and ethologists in turn: that is, myths, rituals, kinship systems, languages, and social institutions of savage peoples, on the one hand, and the feeding and sexual behavior, patterns of dominance and submission, territorial control, and, arguably, aggression, perceived across a wide spectrum of animal species—often including man (the naked ape)—on the other. And while these discrepancies may, as a rule, be based more on differences of subject matter in each case than on divergences of methodology, I

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think it is at least clear that Lévi-Strauss and Ardrey hold essentially conflicting views of what has proved valuable in the contribution made by Rousseau to the study of human nature and behavior.

Perhaps some historians of Rousseau's influence would regard such antithetical praise as evidence of the immensely broad sweep and complex texture of his philosophy as a whole—as if, like Zimri in Dryden's *Absalom and Achitophel*, he was "A man so various that he seemed to be / Not one, but all mankind's epitome." In my view, however, such a rich profusion of ideas would imply more inconsistency than breadth or profundity; if the interpretations of Lévi-Strauss and Ardrey were both accurate, then Rousseau's reflections, by admitting so much and rejecting too little, ought to be less worthy of serious acclaim. In fact, his conception of human nature *is* profound and subtle, I believe, not because it anticipates the views of Lévi-Strauss and Ardrey together, but largely because it excludes the bias of each; the two men, in their different ways, overlook a crucial element of his account of our nature and origins, while focusing upon—and indeed misinterpreting—only one aspect of his thought as if it were the most vital. For Rousseau perceived a historical connection between the animal and cultural features of humanity, and between our physical evolution and social development, which led him to construct a comprehensive anthropological theory remarkably original in his own day, and, in my judgment, still worthy of critical investigation now. My aim here will be to sketch what I take to be the leading features of that theory in the intellectual context which at once most clearly establishes their meaning and, I think, elucidates their significance as well.

II

It is sometimes suggested that our differing assessments of the natural and cultural determinants of human behavior have their foundation in ancient philosophy. Such distinctions as were drawn between nature and custom by Plato, for instance, or between nature and art by Aristotle, are said to underlie the fundamental assumptions that still mark off the natural from the social sciences, while claims about the animal origins of human conduct, or about the instinctual roots of social life, can also be traced to the ancient doctrine of an unbroken *scala naturae* which was supposed to join together all living creatures through a succession of anatomical approximations linked to behavioral similarities as well. It is today much less widely appreciated, however, that one of the main points at issue in the Enlightenment controversies about human nature and culture was the character of the relation between mankind and the great apes. In the 1670s Sir William Petty was still able to argue that the second place in Nature's ladder was actually filled by elephants rather than apes, since, apart from their shape, elephants displayed greater signs of humanity.[9] Yet by the 1680s and 1690s few commentators on the subject still doubted that apes resembled men more closely than did any other creatures, and anthropological interest over the next century came to be directed largely to the question of how we might be connected with, or distinguished from, those animals most immediately adjacent to us in the natural world. The great majority of scientific figures of the period—including Tyson, Buffon, Bonnet, Herder, and Blumenbach—fol-

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lowed Claude Perrault[10] in contending that our exercise of reason and command of language proved our superiority over the apes, since despite the anatomical similarities between these animals and men they lacked the mental capacity to think or speak which was peculiar to our species. A number of scientists and philosophers, however, such as Linnaeus, La Mettrie, Monboddo, and Camper, challenged this perspective of a decisive intellectual gulf between man and beast, sometimes maintaining that infant apes could in principle be trained to speak, sometimes contending, on the contrary, that they could never be so trained, but only because of anatomical or physiological factors rather than any spiritual deficiencies.

The history of these eighteenth-century controversies has been sadly ignored by most anthropologists, no doubt because they regard, or would regard, them as preceding the emergence of their subject around the distinctive questions and problems which have since established its coherence. But the Enlightenment debates about apes, men, and language did not only antedate the anthropological researches of the next period; they very substantially gave rise to the subject in its present forms. For as speculative philosophies regarding our place in Nature came in the late eighteenth century to be superseded by comparative anatomy, by firsthand observations of the behavior of apes, and by more extensive investigations into the cultures of primitive peoples, the attention of scientists came gradually to be drawn away from the apparently gross distinctions between apes and men and at the same time towards the seemingly finer variations which mark off one type of man from another. Around the turn of the nineteenth century, that is, with the exhaustion of the Enlightenment discussions of the primate limits of humanity, anthropology came instead to be focused upon the boundaries and distinctions within our species, upon the study of races, in effect, rather than the study of apes and language. And the controversies about human origins and savage societies that have raged since then in both physical and cultural anthropology, while often of immense significance in themselves, have seemed collectively to be at least internal to the discipline and, in their avowedly empirical character, distinct from the approaches to the study of man's nature that had prevailed before.

Yet for at least two reasons it seems to me regrettable that contemporary investigations of primitive cultures and hominid fossils should generally take such little stock of their own historical roots in Enlightenment philosophies of man: first, because, in attempting to establish the zoological frontiers of humanity, eighteenth-century thinkers were characteristically more concerned with defining the scope of their subject than many social anthropologists are today; and, second, because their definitions were more clearly addressed to the idea of language conceived as a cultural barrier or bridge between animals and men than is often the case now in the writings of physical anthropologists and ethologists alike. Enlightenment commentators, that is, directed their attention more to the conceptual boundaries of humanity than to the geographical outposts of civilization, and they did not take it for granted that a study of man's nature should consist basically of the examination of societies in the remote peripheries of the modern world. By addressing themselves to language as the most central manifestation of our capacity for culture, moreover, they were careful to avoid comparisons between men and apes which dealt exclusively with anatomical

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structures or with similarities of nonverbal behavior. Enlightenment anthropologists, in short, perceived their subject plainly in terms of the relation between the biological and social characteristics of man, without supposing that human nature was either an assemblage of instincts or a product of culture.[11] It is this conjunction of approaches that forms the most striking feature of eighteenth-century speculation about mankind, as I see it—nowhere more conspicuously, or with greater profundity, than in the writings of Rousseau. What is fundamentally missing from the panegyric of Lévi-Strauss is a proper recognition of the importance of Rousseau's account of our physical development as a species in the context of his anthropology as a whole; what is absent from the tribute paid to him by Ardrey is an understanding of why culture fills so prominent a place in his philosophy. In the next two sections I shall examine the ideas advanced by Rousseau on both of these subjects and then conclude with some remarks about his conception of the links between the physical and cultural evolution of man.

III

The main point I wish to stress about Rousseau's view of our physical evolution is that it is based on a set of conjectures to the effect that the human race may have descended from apes. By the mideighteenth century it was already widely known that some species, such as the mastodon, had become extinct and that others, like the camel, had undergone a certain metamorphosis as a consequence of selective breeding and domestication by man. In fact most of the then prevailing monogenist accounts of the origins of humanity stipulated that the manifest variations between types of men were attributable to the cumulative effect of what later came to be termed the inheritance of acquired characters, transmitted over many generations. Rousseau, however, was the first and, I believe, the only, major figure of the Enlightenment who inferred from such intraspecific differences that mankind might actually have evolved from some form of animal. His contemporaries interpreted the same evidence only as proof of natural deformation, with comparisons between human development and animal domestication showing no more than that subdivisions of our race must have declined from their original condition—in essence that the nonwhite communities of individuals which inhabited the more torrid or desolate areas of the earth must have degenerated from an original single stock. Naturalists in the eighteenth century often contrasted the flora and fauna of the New World unfavorably with related species in the Old, and so, too, they regarded non-European men and women as generally inferior copies of an older race.[12] The social customs of aboriginal peoples were occasionally held up for praise by commentators who preferred their apparently natural and simple manners to the refined frippery of advanced cultures, and some observers also depicted wild natives of tropical forests as more like apes and monkeys in their appearance and behavior than like civilized men. But no one in the Enlightenment before Rousseau suggested that such primitive and animal features of the savage state might imply that our true progenitors were really apes. For however close the resemblances might seem, and however much speculation there might be about the imperceptible nuances between species in the natural chain, it was in the

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Enlightenment taken for granted that the chain as a whole was essentially fixed and static, that its main links were points of cleavage rather than conjunction, and that man and ape were separated by a qualitative gulf which, as Buffon put it, even Nature could not bridge.[13]

Rousseau, nevertheless, was convinced that the apparent diversity between types of men throughout the world, and, even more significantly, the marked likeness between some of these types and certain species of ape, justified our forming a quite different conclusion. If we recognized that a great number of the variations between our bodily traits might be attributable to the discrepancies between the climate, forms of nourishment, and general modes of life which prevailed in widely separated parts of the globe, then why should we not conceive the possibility, which such ancient authors as Herodotus and Ctesias had attested anyway, of still more striking differences in the past?[14] In his *Discours sur l'inégalité* of 1755 he admitted that it would be extremely difficult to trace the course of the material metamorphoses undergone by man, since the study of comparative anatomy was still so rudimentary that we could only make the most vague conjectures about this subject. Just the same, he believed that there must have been marked changes or "successive developments" in the physical organization of the human body, all of which would have drawn us away from the "first embryo of the species."[15] Some of these transformations, he observed, would have been embodied in our faculties rather than our appearance, so that savages must originally have had powers of sight, hearing, and smell more subtle than our own senses, and even now whole peoples, such as Hottentots, were able to see as far with the naked eye as Europeans with a telescope. Other changes, however, would have been perfectly conspicuous in our external features alone. Thus while Rousseau regarded the claims about the existence of pygmies as only a "fable" or at best an "exaggeration," the evidence of exceptionally tall individuals in his own day suggested to him that somewhere in the world (perhaps in Patagonia) there are, or might once have been, nations of giants. We even had reason to believe, he added, that differences between particular individuals within our species were sometimes sharper than the differences between some men and some beasts, an observation which the reports of travelers tended to confirm, insofar as they described the state of most of the savages they surveyed as that of animals in general.[16] Indeed, because the taming of mankind has been accomplished by agents whose victims include themselves together with members of other species as well, the distinction between primitive and civilized man was, for Rousseau, possibly even greater than the difference between wild animals and beasts of burden. For by making other creatures serve us, he supposed, we had only fashioned a steeper path of decline from our natural state; we had bred livestock to satisfy our artificial needs and had thereby made our senses still more dull and our constitutions more frail, so that in modern society we are hardly any longer even animals of a certain degenerate kind, but only pets, or prey, broken in by ourselves—weak, docile, fattened, and fleeced.[17]

Now, Rousseau's account of the civilization of humanity as a self-imposed form of domestication points to one of the most original elements of his anthropological theory. For if *l'homme sauvage* and *l'homme civil* were distinguished not only by their social characteristics but also by their bodily traits, and if it was

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the case that the difference between them is even greater than the divergence between wild and tamed animals of the same species, then it followed for him that the physical properties and faculties which set mankind apart from all other creatures might in fact be less sharply defined than most commentators on this subject had supposed. We still had so much to learn about the several widely disparate kinds of men scattered all over the world, Rousseau insisted, that it was absurd for us to make categorical judgments about the inherent qualities which were necessarily typical of our race in general. At the same time, until we had more reliable evidence about the anatomy and mode of life of creatures reported by travelers to resemble man, we could only be uncertain in our assessments of which natural qualities distinguished humanity from the realm of beasts. He contended that at least some of the animals which had a constitution similar to our own were quite possibly varieties of the human species itself, and in his speculations about this subject, both in the *Discours* and in his later "Lettre à Philopolis," he focused his attention particularly upon the creature which he described as an orangutan.[18]

Drawing at length upon the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century African voyages of Andrew Battel, Olfert Dapper, and Girolamo Merolla as recounted in the abbé Prévost's *Histoire générale des voyages*,[19] Rousseau put forward the hypothesis that the large Congolese animals described by these travelers, and taken to be of the same family as the "Orang-Outangs of the East Indies," might really be human beings like the rest of us. A number of modern commentators had imagined that orangutans and their pongo brethren "occupy some intermediate place between mankind and the baboons," but Rousseau observed that in the ancient world these same creatures, then called satyrs, fauns, and the like, were held to be divine, and further research, he argued, might confirm that their true place on Nature's ladder was between that of brutes and gods—in other words that they were men. In any case Rousseau was most impressed by the extent to which his authorities were agreed about the orangutan's "human countenance" and its striking and "exact" physical "resemblance to man." For if it was true that the animal was in so many respects just like a man, then why should we not accept at least a prima facie case for its humanity?[20]

Scientists in the Enlightenment generally agreed with Buffon's lofty proclamation that ours was the most noble species set apart from all the rest, on the grounds that there could be no hybrid progeny resulting from the sexual union of a man or woman with any beast. For Rousseau, on the other hand, this was a matter which had still to be ascertained; we could only establish by experiment, he insisted, whether matings between ourselves and orangutans would prove fruitful.[21] Neither was he deterred by the monogenist contention that the progenitors of modern man must originally have been white, and in this regard he did not even have to confront the thesis—which Buffon, once again, had already rejected—that apes might represent a stage in the physical degeneration of man beyond that of the Negro.[22] While most eighteenth-century naturalists were adamant in holding to the view that orangutans were beneath the level of humanity because they lacked the capacity to think and speak like men, Rousseau maintained that our savage ancestors were unlikely to have been wiser or more loquacious than orangutans, since both reason and speech were just "facultés virtuelles,"[23] which must have undergone a long history of development in com-

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plex social settings before they could have become manifest in our behavior. We could not point to the languages of civilized peoples as proof of the subhumanity of orangutans, because linguistic competence must be mastered and in itself is not a natural characteristic of our race. Hence the apparently mute condition of the orangutan could be explained merely in terms of the creature's scant opportunity to employ and develop those vocal organs which it shared with the rest of us, and on Rousseau's account that condition lent no support at all to the thesis that Nature had formed a great and unbridgeable gulf between mankind and ape. Indeed, the fact that apes were speechless might be attributable, not so much to their want of training, as to their perfectly rational choice. For according to Negro observers it was a "trick of monkeys," he later remarked, to pretend that they cannot speak, though they really can, "out of fear that they might otherwise be made to work."[24]

Of course since Rousseau probably never saw a true orangutan, and since his account of the creature's behavior was drawn from statements of observers who disagreed among themselves, his reflections about its capacities must be treated with a little skepticism and reserve. It was not until the 1770s that a sufficient number of live specimens came to be available in Europe for detailed and reliable studies to be undertaken,[25] and it was not until after Rousseau's death that scientists came to agree that the animal was definitely a species of ape different from the chimpanzee, with which Rousseau, Buffon, and their contemporaries had confused it. But the originality, if not the significance, of Rousseau's comments about the humanity of orangutans was widely recognized in the late eighteenth century. Some critics treated his remarks with scorn, and in the 1760s he suffered the indignity of having a letter falsely ascribed to him signed "ROUSSEAU, jusqu'à ce jour . . . Citoyen de Genève, mais à présent, *ORANG-OUTANG*"[26]; others, like Herder, Bonnet, and Blumenbach, challenged them on a variety of grounds dealing largely with mental or physiological factors underlying the linguistic incompetence of apes; and a few, most notably Monboddo, braved the ridicule and actually endorsed these ideas, though generally in support of claims about the evolution of language rather than the physical development of man. By the early nineteenth century Rousseau's speechless ape had vanished from scientific speculation about our origins, only to reappear soon afterwards as a silent hero in English satirical fiction.[27]

In the present context, however, two important points should be borne in mind about this account of the humanity of orangutans. The first is that Rousseau's elaborate commentary in the *Discours sur l'inégalité* forms one of the earliest and boldest sets of conjectures regarding the physical transformation of mankind in an age when most arguments about the natural chain of being remained fundamentally wedded to a belief in the fixity of species. Arthur Lovejoy's excellent history of that idea rightly points to a variety of ways in which the chain was apparently temporalized in the eighteenth century, so that a supposition previously regarded as only portraying Nature's inventory itself underwent a metamorphosis in the Enlightenment and became for the first time a theory that gave expression to her still uncompleted program.[28] Yet none of Lovejoy's illustrations actually point directly to any cases, or even principle, of evolution from one species to another; all of them, rather, are either more widely focused upon the panorama of organic development throughout the whole of Nature, as was the vision of Leibniz, for instance, or else are more narrowly

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concentrated upon the succession of physical transformations within distinct species, as was Robinet's conception. Rousseau was, I believe, the first Enlightenment figure to suppose that there might be a sequential relation between *particular* species, and the first, moreover, to conceive that the last link in the natural chain—that is, the relation between apes and men—might be one of genetic continuity.

Of course we must not credit Rousseau with a full-fledged theory of human evolution. For one thing, he supposed that modern man could have developed from certain animal species still present in the contemporary world, rather than from any ancestral prototypes or extinct forebears of the hominoid superfamily in general.[29] For another, he believed that apes and men were together zoologically distinct from all other species, and that monkeys could not possibly be counted among our progenitors, because they lacked the attribute of perfectibility, which was characteristic of the highest primates in all their forms, but of the highest primates alone.[30] On Rousseau's interpretation, in short, our roots could not be traced to so distant a source in the earth's past nor to so low a place on Nature's ladder as commentators since the time of Darwin have perceived, and, paradoxically perhaps, his conception of the mutability of humanity as against the constancy of Nature incorporated a rather less dramatic view of the organic changes that effected our creation than of the geological evolution of our planet as a whole. At any rate, Rousseau's account of men as descended from apes provided a temporal perspective of the relation between the two species which was exactly opposite to the only course previously considered—that is, the idea that apes might be degenerate men—and it thus marked a significant milestone among Enlightenment accounts of our origins. In the 1790s such figures as William Smellie, one of Buffon's translators and an important biologist in his own right, no longer had much difficulty in conceiving orangutans to be primitive members of our species, but scientific critics of the doctrine soon won the upper hand, and by the early nineteenth century the subhumanity of the great apes had been reaffirmed.[31]

The second notable point in this context is that Rousseau's portrait of the orangutan as a kind of savage in the state of nature was drawn with greater accuracy than any description of the animal's behavior for a further two hundred years or so—a fact all the more remarkable because there is no reason to suppose that he ever actually saw one. He followed other commentators of his day in recognizing the orangutan's natural habitat to be the tropical forest, but while most of his contemporaries were agreed about the creature's promiscuity, Rousseau alone in the eighteenth century inferred that it never formed lasting sexual attachments—or permanent pair-bonds—with other members of its species.[32] Some naturalists of the period imagined that orangutans were carnivorous in their diet and aggressive in their conduct, but Rousseau had no doubt that they were frugivorous and generally peaceable animals.[33] Not until the publication of Wallace's *The Malay Archipelago* in 1869, moreover, was it confirmed that orangutans are nomadic beasts without clearly delimited territorial ranges, again as Rousseau had already perceived in the *Discours sur l'inégalité*.[34] And not until the late 1960s was it established that Rousseau had been right all along in his guess that orangutans even lack any distinct social system and that, apart from copulations, their lives are essentially solitary and indolent.[35]

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I have in this section tried to sketch a few of the more striking features of Rousseau's physical anthropology ignored by Lévi-Strauss, but I think these same elements of his argument point even more sharply to some of the major shortcomings of Ardrey's ethological approach. For it seems to me quite significant that a person so passionately convinced, as he is, of mankind's basic territorial, aggressive, and socially competitive nature[36] should find so little confirmation of any territorial impulse, or genetically coded forms of aggression, or inegalitarian social relations, among those creatures most akin to us in the animal world, least of all among orangutans. With perfect justification Ardrey observes that recent fossil discoveries suggest that arboreal apes and terrestrial men have been environmentally separated for some 20 million years or more and have therefore evolved along different behavioral paths as well; some of the consequences of this environmental separation, such as the fact that we have become omnivorous hunters in the course of our history, were indeed perceived by Rousseau himself.[37] But it remains the case that all the available scientific evidence—from paleontology, comparative anatomy, genetics, biochemistry, immunology, and the like—confirms what in a sense appears obvious anyway: that mankind is more closely related to the great apes than to any other living species. The truth of Ardrey's general claims about man's basically animal nature, therefore, can only seem rather tenuous insofar as they so commonly rely upon analogies drawn from the behavior of slime molds or penguins in preference to studies of the highest nonhuman primates. At least in his own writings the great apes in general, and orangutans in particular, have once again become the missing link, and Ardrey appears to be most discomfited by this situation, reflecting in his latest work that it is "all a bit too Rousseauesque"[38] for his stomach. His explanations for the reconstructed but now inverted barrier between brutish men and angelic apes, moreover, are implausible when taken separately and inconsistent when taken together. For they range, on the one hand, from the claim that the gorilla, chimpanzee, and orangutan are, after all, only "evolutionary failures" approaching their natural "extinction" (much like their human counterparts in amiable societies upon whom anthropologists have so mistakenly lavished their attention), to the postulate, on the other hand, that the gulf between man and ape is not really so wide after all, since chimpanzees in captivity display clear signs of aggression.[39] *Inventae sunt caveae ut homo ipse se nosceret.*

It may, in any event, seem odd that Rousseau's own picture of the orangutan should have been produced, not through observing the animal in its natural habitat, but mainly by abstracting from civilized man those traits which he supposed unattributable to social life alone. For however speculative this method might appear, it enabled him to construct a more exact account of the creature's behavior in the wild than any which we have had until the last decade. Even today, Edward Tyson's *Orang-Outang* of 1699 remains, I believe by common consent,[40] the best anatomical description ever published of any nonhuman primate, though that work is of course a study of a chimpanzee. In my view, the *Discours sur l'inégalité* ought to be acclaimed by ethologists as an Enlightenment contribution of similar importance, towering over the field, as it has, for an almost equivalent period. And yet to my knowledge no one—apart from Voltaire, who characteristically thought the idea absurd[41]—has ever rec-

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ognized that Rousseau's savage man was truly an orangutan. A fierce and protracted dispute about the factual standing of Rousseau's portrait of the state of nature in the *Discours* could perhaps have been avoided if this simple truth had been perceived. For if it had, Rousseau would now occupy a prominent place, not only in the history of speculative anthropology, but in the history of empirical primatology as well.

IV

I have already observed that anthropologists of the Enlightenment regarded language as the most important manifestation of our unique capacity for culture, and in this section I should like to address myself to Rousseau's own views on that subject. The distinction between man and beast in terms of language is, of course, an ancient doctrine—in Western philosophy as old as the distinction between nature and art or nature and custom—and it has generally served much the same function as these others of underscoring the apparent fact that members of the human race alone are able to behave in morally responsible ways, either through means of verbal persuasion rather than force or intimidation, or through undertakings in speech acts which express our obligations in society.[42] The main contribution of eighteenth-century thinkers in this field was to draw attention once again to the great apes, since, in an age in which the physical resemblances between us and these other primates were held to be more striking than the differences, our linguistic competence often seemed to be the only sure sign of our superiority over them. "Parle, et je te baptise,"[43] dared the Cardinal de Polignac to the chimpanzee in the glass cage at the Jardin du roi, according to the testimony of Diderot; for if only apes could speak, where would man's special place in the universe be then? In the mid and late Enlightenment the debate about the limits of humanity was, indeed, so commonly centered around the question of language and its origins that mute individuals occasionally came to be classified as distinct species, such as Linnaeus's *Homo ferus*, for instance. On some points of principle, moreover, we have not advanced very much since that time. The most distinguished researchers in the field of primate languages today have established that apes show no capacity to relativize or nominalize the lexical markers they employ and hence are apparently unable to generate sentences in the complex forms characteristic of all natural human languages,[44] this despite the claims of Ardrey and like-minded figures who interpret the vocabularies learned by Washoe, Sarah, and other chimpanzees as indicative that the last bastion of man's supposed cultural preeminence is now crumbling as well. Apes that ape have no doubt shown themselves to be far more mentally sophisticated than parroting parrots, but there is as yet no real evidence to suggest that Herder was mistaken when he remarked that "Der Affe äffet immer nach, aber nachgeahmt hat er nie."[45]

In certain respects, to be sure, Rousseau's reflections on the origin of languages actually anticipate the arguments of those scientists who today deny that linguistic competence is a specifically human trait, for, like La Mettrie and Monboddo among his contemporaries, he thought apes might in time develop their latent faculty of speech, just as civilized men had done already.[46] Most of his hypotheses about this problem, however, were focused upon what he took

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to be the characteristics of language rather than the capacities of apes, and his main contention, again expounded first in the *Discours sur l'inégalité*, was that language is not natural to man.[47] In our original state, he asserted, we could not have had occasion to articulate thoughts by attaching arbitrary signs to them, because in that essentially solitary condition we would have been unable to master the rules necessary for both the conception and communication of such signs. Unlike Condillac, who stipulated that even two isolated individuals could in the beginning have devised a language by employing abstract labels or words to classify the objects of their experience, Rousseau believed that any such classification—and, for that matter, our cognitive perception of objects of experience at all—already presupposed a number of linguistic categories, so that the relation between language and thought seemed to him one of reciprocal entailment. And while Condillac had imagined that there was a clear connection between the civilized tongues of modern man and the vocalization of pleasure or fear of the earliest savages, Rousseau detected no manifest link between our complex languages and the simple cries of our progenitors. For the verbal symbols we now employ require a common frame of reference, and this, in turn, can only be manufactured in some kind of society, which, finally, requires a vocabulary of shared linguistic signs for its own invention. He thus remarked in the *Discours* that he was unable to determine whether language was fundamentally a social institution or society a linguistic artifact.[48]

In his anthropological theory Rousseau in fact regarded both of these claims as correct, and he pursued each to some notable, if occasionally disjointed, conclusions. On the one hand, the idea of a language system offered him a fruitful hypothetical model of the foundation of human society itself. In view of his contention against the natural law philosophers that men could not have been drawn together initially by any sociable dispositions,[49] he speculated that the first communities would have been formed by accident rather than design—by natural catastrophes such as floods or earthquakes which perhaps tore islands from continents and brought individuals into permanent territorial proximity for the first time.[50] But once our ancestors would have come to live in such primitive settlements and to confront the same persons day after day, they must have come to take some notice of those qualities which distinguished them from one another. They must have come gradually to recognize which natives among them were the strongest or most handsome, or the best singers or dancers, or the most adroit or most eloquent, for example, and in general they must have begun to perceive, whereas previously they could only have felt the effects of, the differences in their constitutions which were due to Nature. Our savage forebears, that is, would have come to identify other members of their species with whom they were forced by chance to live in daily contact through making discriminations of just this kind, and they must eventually have come in the same way to compare themselves to others and to identify their own traits in terms of what they took to be the impressions formed about them by their neighbors. In Rousseau's judgment, society could only have arisen when men began to attach some significance to these comparisons, for by placing a value upon certain characteristics above others we transfigured our natural variations into moral distinctions.[51] In particular, that primeval individual who was most naturally adroit and eloquent, Rousseau suggests, was the real founder of civil society, for by enclosing a piece of land, claiming it as his own, and persuading

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others foolish enough to believe him, he inaugurated all the misfortunes which have since bedeviled our history.[52] Modern man, that is, arose when *Homo habilis* or *Homo faber* became *Homo loquens* and deceived *Homo ignorans* into supposing that what he said was true.

Now the various human traits esteemed by primitive men were unlikely to have made their appearance all at the same time. Our savage progenitors ought to have been able to recognize those individuals among them who were strongest before they discovered which ones were best able to sing or dance, and they could only have come to be impressed by the most eloquent of their neighbors after they had already adopted the conventions of a language, the general origins of which Rousseau admits in the *Discours* he cannot explain. Because he also suggests in this text, moreover, that there must have been a type of private property in persons—that is, through the formation of family units incorporating sexual partners and their offspring—even before the creation of property in land,[53] his account of the order in which our moral characteristics must have developed seems remarkably vague, and, indeed, it is far from obvious why persons should have found some of their natural qualities to be more worthy of respect than others. Rousseau was nevertheless firmly convinced that as soon as we began to attach importance to our differences we must thereby have embarked upon the establishment of social institutions, and it must have been the institution of property above any other which truly launched mankind, he contended, upon its path of toil, misery, slavery, and conflict.[54]

It is my view, then, that language provides a model of the foundation of society in Rousseau's theory, not only because property relations upon which society is built are largely linguistic in origin (stemming as they do so much from eloquence and deception), but more because language offers a general paradigm of Rousseau's account of the transposition of physical dissimilarities into moral distinctions. In effect, such distinctions are, according to Rousseau, little else but the symbolic representation of natural traits endowed with meanings that issue from the ways in which individuals identify and differentiate one another. Yet this form of interpersonal classification is an exact social counterpart of the manner by which definitions are constructed in already established languages, that is, through the affixation of labels to the objects of thought, as Condillac again had supposed, and indeed Locke and others as well. Of course such a scheme, as I have already indicated, was for Rousseau quite inadequate to explain the origin of language, but it served as an excellent linguistic model in elucidating the origin of society—with this crucial difference: that whereas the lexical markers which we attach to our thoughts are arbitrary, interchangeable, and hence all roughly of equivalent status, our classification of moral traits gives rise to a hierarchy of values in which some characteristics are rendered superior to others. In a sense, social inequality for Rousseau originated ultimately from the fact that the cardinal system of identification employed by our forebears must have been transliterated in language into an ordinal system for ranking moral preferences, and the baneful effects of that linguistic corruption of our species, he believed, are with us still.

If it was in this fashion that Rousseau elaborated his view of society as an essentially linguistic artifact, he developed his thesis about the social origins of language with equal conviction. In part his argument consisted simply of the proposition, once again, that until we had formed settled social relationships we

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could have had no occasion for communicating our ideas, and no shared frame of reference to ensure that our utterances were understood by others, so that the necessary conjunction of society with language in his theory appears almost as close as the link between language and thought. Yet he pursued this point in greater depth and more detail as well. In his *Essai sur l'origine des langues*, for example, he observed that while nations are more sharply defined by their linguistic boundaries than by political or any other frontiers, the languages which mark off peoples in that way have themselves been shaped and molded by the patterns of community life from which they stem, so that it was impossible to understand the nature of man's verbal behavior without investigating the social roots of linguistic usage. The most primitive Mediterranean tongues, for instance, must have been articulated in enchanting sonorous voices, Rousseau insisted, because they would at first have expressed the passionate attraction of men and women for one another in societies in which a mild climate and fertile soil facilitated the leisurely satisfaction of their other needs. In the north, however, our earliest languages must have been gruff, shrill, or monotonous, because in such inclement surroundings speakers would have been obliged to work before they had time for play and thus would have continually cried out for help rather than whisper any mellifluous love songs to their neighbors.[55] Of course these linguistic differences are in some respects attributable to Nature as much as to man, but Rousseau's main point here was that the distinctive patterns of social life which arose in disparate natural environments must themselves have given rise to diverse modes of linguistic expression.

In any event, when the barbarians of the north eventually conquered the Mediterranean world, he contended, their guttural and staccato speech also came to dominate the melodic inflections that had prevailed in the south before, so that our earliest modulated forms of tonal discourse must have been gradually suppressed and transformed into the humdrum reverberations of our subjugators' prose.[56] This loss of inflection, moreover, came for Rousseau to be a measure of the loss of spirit and passion in human affairs as a whole. For the prosaic character of the languages imposed upon us by our rulers inspired us with little else but servile manners, and in the modern age we have been transfixed into the listless auditors of those who govern by harangues from the rostrum and diatribes from the pulpit.[57] In fact so dispirited have we become under the yoke of kings, ministers, and priests that those vocal intonations which had once expressed our pleasures have now been wholly reconstituted into nothing more than the terms that denote our trades. Whereas savages once chanted *aimez-moi* to one another, and barbarians muttered *aidez-moi*, now civilized men only grumble *donnez de l'argent*.[58]

Rousseau's account of the social corruption of language thus corresponds in striking ways to his theory of the linguistic corruption of society. The pernicious consequences that stem from the institution of property through a largely linguistic medium have their counterpart in the afflictions that arise from the substitution of prose for melody in speech, and our entitlements to cultivated land, on the one hand, and our rules of cultivated discourse, on the other, have together engendered much of the moral decadence of cultivated man. Upon the model of inegalitarian property relations we have constructed whole social systems in which the divisions between rich and poor, ruler and ruled, and

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master and slave form the central features, so that civilization has come progressively to be defined by its political character and functions, with the principles of dominance and subservience governing almost every aspect of our lives. Philosophers of the Enlightenment often described man's civil state as that of *la société policée*,[59] but Rousseau developed this idea more forcefully than any other figure of his age, and throughout his writings he insisted that everything depends ultimately upon politics and that "aucun peuple ne seroit jamais que ce que la nature de son Gouvernement le feroit être."[60] Equally, he perceived that our social and political relations have an essentially symbolic character—that they derive their binding force over human affairs from the values they express and the customary significance that is attached to them in much the same way and at the same level of abstraction as the terms of our polluted and sophistical languages convey their meanings. For, according to Rousseau, our adopted meanings have in fact been a gross distortion of the truth. In civilized societies we have come to be imprisoned by our symbols, ensnared by the images of our freedom as we run headlong into our chains, altogether captivated by our accomplishments which are in fact no more than the trappings of culture. In civilized societies, in short, the very institutions we invented for our advancement have been the cause of our moral decline. We have too much admired those centuries in which arts and letters have flourished, Rousseau remarked in his *Contrat social*, without penetrating the secret object and the fatal effect of their culture. Thus, quoting Tacitus, he concluded, "Idque apud imperitos humanitas vocabatur, cum pars servitutis esset."[61]

I have here addressed myself to Rousseau's conception of culture in the light of his claims about the interpenetration of society and language, not because the scientific, religious, literary, or artistic features of culture figure less prominently in his thought; on the contrary, his reputation has always rightly been based above all upon his critique of culture in these more familiar senses, and his writings about the decline of music, for instance, are perhaps more extensive than those in any other field. But his accounts of the nature of both society and language provide, in my view, the clearest picture of his idea of culture in general because they define what he took to be the two most central characteristics of any cultural system: first, that it is a collective artifact or set of conventions produced by individuals only in a social context, and, second, that it is a symbolic network of ideas which convey, and often conceal, human purposes and meanings. If we are to believe the most eminent sociobiologist of our day, "Culture . . . can be interpreted as a hierarchical system of environmental tracking devices," which "aside from its involvement with language . . . differs from animal tradition only in degree."[62] For Rousseau, however, a culture divorced from language was no culture at all, and even the perfectible apes that he imagined to be our progenitors have—on the evidence of their linguistic achievements—shown no sign yet that they are able to manufacture the symbols around which all true cultures are formed, and, indeed, upon which all human societies, but human societies alone, he believed, have been invariably constructed.

Yet while it appears that Rousseau placed greatest emphasis upon the social and linguistic foundations of culture, we ought to bear in mind the moral and historical dimensions which he attached to it as well. For the language of culture

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was essentially the language of values, in his judgment, and the values prevalent in every nation were always shaped by custom, tradition, and "la force de l'habitude."[63] On the one hand, this perspective of course implied that there was great cultural diversity between societies, and Rousseau often invoked the anthropological literature of his own day to stress that point, condemning the blinkered "tourbe Philosophesque,"[64] as he put it, which traveled nowhere but presumed that men in all places and at all times were governed by the same passions and vices as we are. On the other hand, however, Rousseau's scheme also implied that cultural patterns, notwithstanding their distinctions in different parts of the world, were in each case a conflux of symbols that formed the social manifestation of the inheritance of acquired characteristics within a community, with the history of mankind as a whole predominantly the history of the convergence of Western cultures and their rise to ascendancy over all the rest.

Some recent commentators, impressed by such rough parallels between human social development and biological evolution in Nature, have remarked that culture must serve the same function in the history of our race as natural selection for every other form of life[65]; or that the evolution of culture must have proceeded in the same manner as the evolution of species determined by natural selection[66]; or even that the transformational grammars of our languages serve as a symbolic analogue in culture for the genetic codes upon which all patterns of organic growth and change depend.[67] We shall no doubt witness much important research in the next few years which builds upon such resemblances, perhaps not only with regard to the structure of language, but applied to the formal principles, or what are held to be the formal principles, of other cultural systems too. In this context, however, I should like only to note that I think Rousseau would have been at least as much impressed by the differences between biological and cultural forms of adaptation as by their apparent similarities. For one thing, culture, as he understood it, was not some kind of complex adaptive mechanism at all, but rather an excessively integrated, overly specialized, maladaptive network of functions within which, in his terms, our apparent steps towards the perfection of the individual have in reality led towards the decrepitude of the species.[68] For another, I think he would have regarded any parallels between linguistic and biological codes of patterned growth or behavior as fundamentally misconceived, perhaps partly because languages "have an infinitely greater capacity for hybridization,"[69] though more because the meanings expressed in them are normally as false as the purposes they serve unsalutary for man. Linguistic principles and structures that comprise the symbols of our cultures are not mirrors of the world, Rousseau believed, but rather moral prisms that transfigure and obfuscate our behavior in it; insofar as they are founded upon self-deception, their sense remains opaque and unclear to us, so that their true significance differs sharply from that signified by their constitutive terms.[70] "Les Sciences, les Lettres et les Arts . . . étendent des guirlandes de fleurs sur les chaînes de fer dont ils sont chargés."[71] Through culture *Homo faber* has in fact become *Homo fabulator*; *Homo fabricans* is actually *Homo fabricator*; *Homo loquens* no more than *Homo ventosus*; and our species as a whole, not *Homo sapiens* but *Homo deceptus*. We should have been wary of the impostor who founded civil society, Rousseau remarked, for "l'état de réflexion est un état contre

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Nature, et . . . l'homme qui médite est un animal dépravé."[72] On one point, nevertheless, the analogy between cultural development and natural selection would have held good in his philosophy, because it follows from his account of both our physical and social evolution that there is no more fixity about culture and its symbols than about the bodily traits of mankind as a whole. Fixity, for Rousseau, was an arbitrary characteristic of languages rather than a necessary feature of either cultures or species, and from the linguistic base of our specification of terms stemmed the moral emblems of our specialization of roles, and ultimately the fixation of social man in an abstract world of his own making.

In the light of this view of culture it seems to me that the work of Lévi-Strauss could have benefited greatly, and, indeed, disarmed some of its critics, if only he had followed his model more closely. For despite his frequently professed admiration for Rousseau, and despite the immense subtlety of his own anthropological vision and the eloquence with which he presents it, his writings lack the sense of cultural diversity and the rich historical perspective of Rousseau's theory. Instead of focusing upon the primate limits of humanity and offering an account of our cultural evolution, Lévi-Strauss has portrayed the mental processes of mankind generally as if they were universal constants, replacing "the particular minds of particular savages in particular jungles with the Savage Mind immanent in us all."[73] In *La Pensée sauvage* he quotes with favor Rousseau's remark that "pour étudier l'homme il faut apprendre à porter sa vüe au loin" and even claims that the task of reabsorbing "des humanités particulières dans une humanité générale"[74] is only the first stage along the way towards the reintegration of culture with nature and finally life altogether with its physicochemical foundations. But he forgets that Rousseau's only portrait of man, painted "exactement d'après nature et dans toute sa vérité,"[75] was that of his own *Confessions*—the autobiography of an individual who supposed that he was made like no one else. The idea of humanity in general was for Rousseau a misconception. "Où est l'homme qui puisse . . . se séparer de lui même?" he asked. "Nous concevons la société générale d'après nos sociétés particulières," and "il n'y [a] point de société naturelle et générale entre les hommes."[76] Lévi-Strauss's circumnavigations of the images of man are too much encumbered by the baggage of an imaginary voyage to allow his passage through the channels of Rousseau's own anthropological expeditions. In his contention that the aim of the discipline is to locate the "invariants" of human culture ("l'idée d'une humanité générale, à laquelle conduit la réduction ethnographique"),[77] he departs sharply from Rousseau's thesis that we are distinguished from all other species by the indefinite flexibility and plasticity of our nature, and he thus joins the ranks of thinkers like Grotius, Hobbes, Pufendorf, and Locke, whom Rousseau challenged for having falsely supposed that men were everywhere fundamentally the same.

The ethological approach of Ardrey, on the other hand, fares much worse still against the measure of Rousseau's cultural anthropology. For Ardrey's analogies spring from animal to human behavior in great leapfrog jumps which hurdle over cultures altogether, and his account of the instinctual roots of aggression, territoriality, and the like, leave us with explanations of a kind which has been aptly described as a "bargain made with reality in which an understanding of the phenomenon is gained at the cost of everything we know about

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it."[78] But not only has Ardrey left out the realm of culture from his descriptions of how we live; he has also quite misread the philosophy of Rousseau which he praises and condemns in turn, since he maintains that the society conceived by Rousseau was constructed by "fallen angels," whereas his own social contract is an agreement between "risen apes."[79] In fact, however, there are no angels of any sort in Rousseau's state of nature, and Ardrey ought to have perceived that, according to Rousseau, men are actually fallen apes, literally descended from their condition by a link in the chain of being that is a downward moral slope—with the beastly manner in which we treat these creatures no doubt forming part of the proof of our descent.

If only Ardrey had worn the anthropomorphic spectacles with which he views the world of Nature while surveying Rousseau's writings, moreover, he might have taken stock of the abundant collection of zoological or quasi-zoological attributes which Rousseau attached to man. For our cultural world was indeed filled by beasts of certain types, according to Rousseau: beasts that were not so much like slime molds or penguins as like domesticated animals and fabricated predators. Why else did he so often depict civilized men to be human cattle—"des troupeaux de bétail," "des Bêtes esclaves," resembling "des Animaux nés libres et abhorrant la captivité," sharing the anguish voiced in "les tristes mugissemens du Bétail entrant dans une Boucherie"?[80] And why else did he regard the attested histories of vampires as but further manifestations of the somber and nefarious tyranny of opinion exercised by priests over the minds of men?[81] Like Voltaire in his own day and Marx afterwards, Rousseau employed vampire metaphors to account for the benighted and parasitic relations of mutual dependence that prevailed in our societies, since while civilization had denatured the animal in one sense it had supernaturalized the beast in another.

Rousseau's anthropology, therefore, revolved not just around the divide between nature and culture in our societies but also around the double metamorphosis from animals to men to monsters of our own making which comprises the history of the self-imposed domestication of our species. Culture may have been the principal instrument of our transfiguration, and we could now only curse the few beneficiaries of the founder of civil society with Caliban's malediction addressed to Prospero in *The Tempest*: "The red plague rid you/ For learning me your language!" Yet at the same time the real miscreants of our age—tormented, cowed, vicious, and terrible—are represented in Rousseau's texts as well. Ardrey should recall that it is no signatory of the social compact but rather Frankenstein's monster who perceived himself to be the fallen angel. Rousseau's thesis was that civilized men had not only fabricated brutes of this kind but, worse still, were constantly offering themselves as its prey.

V

According to Lévi-Strauss the possibility of our passage from nature to culture—or, what is effectively the same, from sentiment to reason, and animality to humanity—is explained in Rousseau's philosophy by our possession of the psychic attribute of pity or compassion. It is because man originally felt himself to be identical with creatures which resembled him, writes Lévi-Strauss, that he came to acquire his capacity to distinguish himself among them just as he

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differentiated them from the members of other zoological species, "c'est-à-dire de prendre la diversité des espèces pour support conceptuel de la différenciation sociale."[82]

In my view this interpretation of Rousseau's argument is incorrect. For Rousseau believed that compassion, like the instinct of self-love, is an attribute of animals in general which in no way facilitates their creation of culture.[83] On the contrary, it was man's peculiar achievement in suppressing his natural sentiment of pity, and in transforming his benign self-love into a kind of vanity or selfishness at the expense of others, that lay at the heart of his cultural development and moral decadence. In their natural state our forebears must already have been unique, Rousseau contended, not by virtue of their compassion, but because of two special attributes—natural liberty and perfectibility—which together enabled them to construct modes of life wholly uncharacteristic of the rest of the animal world. Every type of creature apart from man, he observed, is nothing more than an ingenious machine provided with instincts appropriate to its self-preservation, so that other animals, while unfettered by any social obligations, are nevertheless fully subject to the commands of Nature. Only our savage progenitors possessed the freedom to determine how best to comply with these commands—by selecting either to confront or flee from danger, for instance—so that in attributing natural liberty to man and his hominid forebears Rousseau meant that they were distinguished, not so much by any particular traits, as by the absence of internal mechanisms which controlled the behavior of all other beasts.[84]

At the same time he supposed that even the most primitive men must also have been able to organize the manner of their response to natural impulses in a cumulative way, with each person having the power to make his adopted habits a permanent feature of his character and to improve and develop them as he might see fit. In Rousseau's view, in fact, this capacity for progressive self-instruction was a crucial feature of mankind, since it was precisely because we were able to make ourselves more perfect rather than merely different from other creatures that we could undergo a *history* of change. After a few months every animal aside from us is already stamped by the behavioral properties of its maturity, he observed, and after a thousand years the whole of its species is imprinted with the same instincts and patterns of life as the first generation. We alone have shown ourselves capable of improving our faculties, and we are unique among animals as well in exhibiting what is in effect the same capacity to make retrograde steps and impair our nature.[85] Because the offspring of the earliest men and women could swiftly imitate the qualities of their parents, moreover, it followed that we could always transmit our acquired characteristics from one generation to the next, so that the whole of our developing species must thus have been able to depart from its natural state. Our liberty and perfectibility may not have been easy to perceive in our original behavior, but these inchoate faculties had nonetheless made possible the cultural evolution of the human race.

I stress these points in connection with the anthropology of Lévi-Strauss because, in my view, they are tantamount to a claim that man's passage from the realm of nature to that of culture—or, to use Rousseau's own terms, the passage from "le physique" to "le moral"[86]—must have been facilitated by the exer-

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cise of our liberty and perfectibility. He believed that our adaptive dimension was actually constituted by our capacity for culture rather than the manifestations of culture itself, and he ascribed that capacity to the interconnection between two distinctively human traits. In his own work he in fact often placed more emphasis upon the second of those traits than on the first, since our perfectibility bore witness to our natural liberty in a historical perspective, and in civilized society it was in any case the only one which still remained intact. Thus, Rousseau contended, it was the perfectibility of apes and men together rather than the culture of civilized man alone which set us apart from all types of monkeys, so that, in effect, perfectibility has been the central catalyst of our evolutionary transformation from ape to citizen.

Now it is often argued that our capacity for culture requires a physical explanation of some sort, since even if language and society are the handiwork of mankind, our ability to construct such institutions cannot be the outcome of our endeavors—a point which I think Rousseau himself implicitly accepted, insofar as he supposed our natural liberty and perfectibility to be fundamental traits of our species, that is, neither linguistic nor social in origin. Many commentators have maintained that the human capacity for culture is essentially attributable to the much larger cranial measurements of *Homo sapiens* as compared to earlier hominids, or to the unique neurological links between the cognitive and sound-producing centers of our brains. Some have focused instead upon the more prolonged immaturity of human infants as contrasted to all other mammals, attempting thereby to explain certain social features of our cultural life which are less obviously connected with intelligence or language; and Ardrey, for his part, asserts that the fundamental divide between man and beast is due to our muscular coordination centered in the buttocks,[87] in this way no doubt confirming his animal hindsight. Rousseau also speculated on these matters, commenting at some length upon the probability that our ancestors were bipedal in nature and upright in stature, which he thought enabled primeval women, for instance, to carry infants in their arms and thus nourish them more easily than the females of other species[88]—a thesis which Herder, in turn, later made the centerpiece of his more lofty philosophy that we are superior to orangutans because they merely stoop while we gaze at the heavens.

In fact, however, this approach to the subject of man's capacity for culture has so far proved largely misleading, and that for at least two reasons: first, because the environmental conditions determining natural selection for the requisite traits are themselves likely to have incorporated social or cultural features of hominid life already; and, second, because we still have very little evidence of any direct physical correlations between particular cultural aptitudes and any specific organs or bodily structures which can be explained as a consequence of natural selection. Many modern geneticists contend that the shapes and sizes of our organs are determined by their allometric growth in our phylogenic history no less than by their selected adaptation for particular functions,[89] and it is now widely held that the neurological complexities of the organization of the brain render it questionable that we shall ever have a plausible anatomical explanation of the emergence of language.[90] As for the cultural advantages of vertical posture, I think Georg Foster's excellent comment of 1785 about erect two-legged birdbrains may still be apt: "Tragen denn nicht alle Vögel den Kopf in die Höhe; am meisten die allerdümmsten."[91]

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Despite his remarks about the advantages of upright stature, Rousseau's main point, moreover, was not to trace the physical or biological roots of our capacity for culture, but rather to describe the general plasticity of our mental attributes in the state of nature—to explain the open texture and unpredictability of the behavior of perfectible creatures—for it was just the indeterminacy of the activities of our savage forebears which marked their main difference from other animals. Rousseau believed that we are not essentially adapted for culture or language or, indeed, anything else, but rather that we are beings whose genetic makeup includes no mechanisms that prescribe fixed patterns of response to natural impulses. In short, his view was that our lives are not governed by instincts. I cannot imagine what he might have thought about the claims of some contemporary ethologists to the effect that animals, strictly speaking, have no instincts either, but at least his conception of man's native faculties stands manifestly apart, as I see it, from both the constricted vision of culturalized nature set forth by Ardrey and the stereotype images of naturalized culture provided by Lévi-Strauss.

For reasons which obviously stem from this account of the indeterminacy of human nature, Rousseau supposed that the perfectibility of men in their original condition did not ensure that they would become more perfect creatures, and the real development of that attribute, he maintained, depended upon the *actual* choices which individuals must have made when they adopted their various social institutions and cultural styles of life. Our perfectibility established only that there could be cumulative change in one direction or another, and it was as much in accord with the history of our degradation as it would have been compatible with the history of our progress. Rousseau contended, in fact, that by making ourselves gradually less dependent upon Nature and more dependent on other men we had misused our liberty in the course of our development and had brought about, not our improvement, but our debasement by electing to become slaves to new compulsions that we imposed upon ourselves and bequeathed to our children. Our most remarkable faculty, that is, had played the most crucial role in the evolution of social inequality by making possible the transformation of our natural differences into moral distinctions, so that it was ultimately our perfectibility, he remarked, which was the principal source of all our misfortunes: "Cette faculté distinctive, et presque illimitée, est la source de tous les malheurs de l'homme . . . c'est elle qui le tire, à force de tems, de cette condition originaire, dans laquelle il couleroit des jours tranquilles, et innocens . . . c'est elle, qui faisant éclore avec les siécles ses lumiéres et ses erreurs, ses vices et ses vertus, le rend à la longue le tiran de lui-même, et de la Nature."[92]

This idea of perfectibility is, I think, particularly striking both within Enlightenment thought and in the context of subsequent social theory. On the one hand, Rousseau actually introduced the term into the vocabulary of eighteenth-century speculation about human nature,[93] and its importance was quickly perceived by contemporary reviewers of the *Discours sur l'inégalité*, for instance by Grimm and Herder, and by Jean de Castillon in his own work of the same title which forms a reply to Rousseau's text. During the 1760s, moreover, the term came to be employed quite regularly in the field of French natural history, most conspicuously, perhaps, in Robinet's *De la nature*. The fact that it did become fashionable in late Enlightenment thought is, of course, not difficult to understand, since the idea expresses a secular and historical view of man's moral

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development which was shared by many of the leading *philosophes* of the period who, like Rousseau, conceived it to be a challenge to the orthodox Christian dogma of human corruption through original sin. Yet, on the other hand, the very word which most clearly defines that characteristic Enlightenment perspective has a significance for an understanding of our past, in his theory, which is quite opposed to the sense envisaged by most of his contemporary admirers and critics alike. For whereas in the doctrines of the *philosophes* our perfectibility had ensured our advance from barbarism to civilization, in his account it had engendered only our moral and political decline. Rousseau, that is, joined a highly optimistic belief about human potentialities to a deeply pessimistic vision of man's worldly accomplishments, largely redefining the notions of an essentially theological tradition of moral philosophy in terms which anticipate the more sociological modes of argument of his successors. As one distinguished interpreter of his writings has remarked, his analysis of our evolution thus took on "l'allure d'une *chute* accélérée dans la corruption . . . Rousseau transporte le mythe religieux dans l'histoire elle-même."[94] Of course the ethical principles of that analysis were not widely shared by the enthusiasts of progress in his own day, for when they adopted his idea of perfectibility they divorced it from his claims about its implications with respect to the nature of culture and civilization in general. Nevertheless, the theory of history which Rousseau built around his concept—and especially the account of property and inequality which he attached to it—were to exercise a striking influence upon the development of nineteenth-century social thought, and they were to breathe new life, through new formulations, in the work of Marx in particular.

My aim here has been to try to show how Rousseau's theory of perfectibility forms the central element of both his physical and cultural anthropology together, but it remains for me to stress one final point. According to Lévi-Strauss, the inaugural and profound contribution which Rousseau made to anthropology rests partly on the fact that he undertook the study of human nature in a manner distinct from the approaches of the historian or the moralist. While that proposition may to some extent be true of Lévi-Strauss himself, it is, in my view, quite untrue of Rousseau: first, because his anthropology was an attempt to reconstruct the evolutionary history of mankind which our perfectibility had made possible, and, second, because it forms the most impassioned and most comprehensive moral critique of this history devised throughout the whole Enlightenment. But not only that. His anthropology actually incorporates an elaborate prescriptive moral philosophy as well, and it includes such a dimension because Rousseau supposed that even in the most decadent societies individuals still retain their capacity for self-improvement. Our natural liberty had no doubt been lost in the course of our cultural development, and once that trait was abandoned, he claimed, it could never be recovered.[95] If our perfectibility were similarly lost, however, then there would be no worldly possibility for civilized men to overcome their corruption, and since persons everywhere tended to display only those vicious moral qualities impressed upon them by their governments, this would suggest that it was now beyond the power of individuals or communities to realize any form of virtue. In fact the whole of Rousseau's later philosophy—his studies of the nature of religion, his political writings on Geneva, Corsica, and Poland, his commentaries on the theater, and, most important

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of all, his *Contrat social*, *Emile*, and *Rêveries du promeneur solitaire*—bears ample testimony to his belief that our natural perfectibility might still be employed to our advantage. In the corpus of his later work Rousseau indeed mapped out at least three major roads to our emancipation from the oppressive state described in the *Discours sur l'inégalité*, of which the first was directed to politics, the second to education, and the third solitude, each plan offering basically disparate accounts—in public, domestic, and private forms—of the autonomy, self-reliance, and independence that could perhaps supply moral remedies for the misfortunes of civilized man. And while these writings suggest that our paths of redemption were likely to prove more heterogeneous than the course of our corruption, I note here only that such alternatives were conceivable in practice because however much men and women had been the victims of their own history they remained its authors as well, and their perfectibility still enabled them to form a future morally superior to their past.

My concluding point, then, is that the moral philosophy of Rousseau constitutes an integral part of his anthropological theory. I suppose that for some readers this suggestion of adding yet a further dimension to the zoological framework with which I began might seem too much to bear. Was Rousseau's whole theory perhaps no more, in the end, than just another way of expressing that famous antivivisectionist cry: "I have felt all my life an irresistible impulse to rush in wherever anyone is 'oppressed' and try to 'deliver' him, her, or *it*"?[96] Did he have it in mind to create a society for the salvation of clockwork orangs? Rousseau was not above self-parody, and the lighter touches of his imagination generally show the same deft hand as the deeper impressions that he engraved as well. In my view, however, the moral character of his anthropology has little to do with the resuscitation of the ape within us or the protection of the apes outside. Its aim, rather, is to persuade us of the need to reconstitute or else abandon the cultures within which civilized apes have enchained us. We may have learned from Marx that we have nothing to lose apart from our chains, but if we return to Rousseau we shall find explanations of more links in those chains than any other thinker ever perceived.

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[1]I am much indebted to David Adams, Dennis Austin, Marjorie Gray, George Kerferd, Gill Sainsbury, Hillel Steiner, and Ann Wochiler for their guidance and assistance in the preparation of this text.

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[3]Lévi-Strauss, "Jean-Jacques Rousseau, fondateur des sciences de l'homme," in *Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, ed. Samuel Baud-Bovy et al. (Neuchâtel, 1962). More recent and extensive accounts of Rousseau's anthropology can be found in Michèle Duchet, *Anthropologie et Histoire au siècle des lumières* (Paris, 1971); Victor Goldschmidt, *Anthropologie et politique: Les principes du système de Rousseau* (Paris, 1974); and Ronald Meek, *Social Science and the Ignoble Savage* (Cambridge, 1976).

[4]Robert Ardrey, *The Social Contract* (London, 1970), p. 96.

[5]See, for instance, Ardrey, *The Territorial Imperative* (London, 1967), pp. 13–14, 78–79.

[6]See especially Ardrey, *African Genesis* (London, 1961), pp. 148, 150, 154–155; *The Territorial Imperative*, pp. 21, 30, 289; and *The Hunting Hypothesis* (London, 1976), p. 190.

[7]See *The Social Contract*, p. 96. The enthusiasm Ardrey shows for Rousseau in this work apparently owes much to the influence of Roger Masters (see ibid., p. 99), the distinguished author of *The Political Philosophy of Rousseau* (Princeton, 1968).

[8]Though Lévi-Strauss is mentioned in a parenthetical aside in Ardrey's latest book, *The Hunting Hypothesis*, p. 59.

[9]See *The Petty Papers*, ed. the Marquis of Landsdowne (London, 1927), vol. 2, p. 27.

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[10]See Perrault et al., *Suite des Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire naturelle des animaux* (Paris, 1676), p. 126.

[11]For general introductions to Enlightenment anthropology, both physical and cultural, see especially Carminella Biondi, *Mon frère, tu es mon esclave!* (Pisa, 1973); Duchet, *Anthropologie et Histoire au siècle des lumières*; Clarence Glacken, *Traces on the Rhodian Shore* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1967), chaps. 11–14; John Greene, *The Death of Adam* (Ames, Iowa, 1959); Georges Gusdorf, *Dieu, la nature, l'homme au siècle des lumières* (Paris, 1972); Marvin Harris, *The Rise of Anthropological Theory* (New York, 1968), chap. 2; Meek, *Social Science and the Ignoble Savage*; Franck Tinland, *L'Homme sauvage* (Paris, 1968); and Herbert Wendt, *In Search of Adam* (Boston, 1956), chaps. 1–5. A fairly representative sample of the wide range of contemporary views about the relation between nature and culture in anthropological theory may be drawn from the following works: *Culture: Man's Adaptive Dimension*, ed. Montague Ashley Montagu (Oxford, 1968); Theodosius Dobzhansky, *Mankind Evolving* (New Haven, 1962); Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (London, 1975); Serge Moscovici, *La société contre nature* (Paris, 1972); Lionel Tiger and Robin Fox, *The Imperial Animal* (London, 1972); and Leslie White, *The Evolution of Culture* (New York, 1959).

[12]For a splendid treatment of these contrasts see Antonello Gerbi, *The Dispute of the New World* (Pittsburgh, 1973).

[13]See the passage from the fifth volume (1755) of Buffon's *Histoire naturelle* (Paris, 1749–1804) reproduced in the *Oeuvres philosophiques de Buffon*, ed. Jean Piveteau (Paris, 1954), p. 359a.

[14]See Rousseau, *Discours sur l'inégalité*, in the *Oeuvres complètes de Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, ed. Bernard Gagnebin and Marcel Raymond, 4 vols. (Paris, 1959–1969, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade), vol. 3, p. 208, note 10. Subsequent references to Rousseau's works are in this edition.

[15]Ibid., p. 134.

[16]See ibid., pp. 140–141, and p. 208, note 10.

[17]See ibid., p. 139.

[18]"Orangutan" is originally a Malay term meaning "man of the woods," and it is now applied exclusively to one species of anthropoid ape (*Pongo pygmaeus*) found in Borneo and Sumatra only. In European letters, however, the word was first employed (by Nicolaas Tulp in his *Observationum medicarum* of 1641) in connection with the African chimpanzee, and until about the end of the eighteenth century these two species, and many other great apes, both real and fictitious, as well, were regularly assimilated under the generic name "orangutan." Some of the confusions about the identification of this creature in the Enlightenment are discussed in my "Tyson and Buffon on the Orang-utan," *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century*, 155 (1976): 2301–2319. For Rousseau's comments on the orangutan in his "Lettre à Philopolis" (Bonnet), see vol. 3, pp. 234–235.

[19]Each of these figures is cited in a long passage from the *Histoire générale des voyages* (Paris, 1746–89), vol. 5 (1748), pp. 87–89, that Rousseau quotes almost in full in note 10 of the *Discours sur l'inégalité*.

[20]See the *Discours sur l'inégalité*, pp. 209–211, note 10.

[21]See ibid., p. 211.

[22]If anything, the black man was for Rousseau more like the natural savage than was the white man (see ibid., p. 137, note). In "Jean-Jacques Rousseau and the Negro," *Journal of Negro History*, 21 (1936): 294–303, Mercer Cook makes the interesting point, too seldom remembered, that Thomas Day's poem *The Dying Negro* was dedicated to Rousseau (in the 3rd ed. of 1775). For Buffon's reflections on skin color and degeneration, see especially his *Histoire naturelle*, vol. 3 (1749), pp. 502–503; the *Oeuvres philosophiques de Buffon*, pp. 354b–355a; and the commentary on this subject of Phillip Sloan, "The Idea of Racial Degeneracy in Buffon's *Histoire Naturelle*," in *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture*, vol. 3, ed. Harold Pagliaro (Cleveland, 1973), pp. 293–321.

[23]*Discours sur l'inégalité*, p. 208, note 10.

[24]Rousseau to Hume, 29 March 1766, *Correspondance complète de Rousseau*, ed. Ralph Leigh (Geneva and Banbury, 1965–), vol. 29, no. 5129, p. 66. The suggestion that apes or monkeys remain silent for good reasons of their own, especially to avoid work and enslavement, appeared at least as early as 1623 in Richard Jobson's *The Golden Trade*.

[25]See especially Arnout Vosmaer, "Description de l'Orang-Outang" (Amsterdam, 1778), pp. 12–13; Buffon, "Addition à l'article des Orangs-outangs," *Histoire naturelle*, suppl. vol. 7 (1789), pp. 15–16; and Petrus Camper, "De l'orang-outang, et de quelques autres espèces de singes," in his *Oeuvres* (Paris, 1803), vol. 1, pp. 46–51.

[26]*Correspondance complète de Rousseau*, vol. 12, appendix 286, pp. 301–306.

[27]Particularly as Sir Oran Haut-ton in Thomas Love Peacock's *Melincourt* of 1817.

[28]See Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being* (Cambridge, Mass., 1936), p. 244. With regard to the idea of evolution in the Enlightenment see also Peter Bowler, "Evolutionism in the Enlightenment," *History of Science*, 12 (1974): 159–183; William Bynum, "The Great Chain of Being after Forty Years: An Appraisal," *History of Science*, 13 (1975): 1–28; *Forerunners of Darwin: 1745–1859*, ed. Bentley Glass et al., 2nd ed. (Baltimore, 1968), chaps. 2–9; Emile Guyénot, *Les sciences de la vie aux XVII^e^ et XVIII^e^ siècles: L'idée d'évolution* (Paris, 1941); and Jacques Roger, *Les sciences de la vie dans la pensée française du XVIII^e^ siècle* (Paris, 1963).

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[29]Speculation about the possible lineages of man and the taxonomic classification of hominoid fossils are today in a state of perhaps greater flux than ever before. For one of the more recent surveys of the subject see *Paleoanthropology: Morphology and Paleocology*, ed. Russell Tuttle (The Hague, 1975).

[30]See the *Discours sur l'inégalité*, p. 211, note 10.

[31]In his *Philosophy of Natural History* (Edinburgh, 1790–99), vol. 1, p. 521, Smellie maintained that "Man, in his lowest condition, is evidently linked, both in the form of his body and the capacity of his mind, to the large and small orang-outang." This contention may be contrasted, for instance, with that of Jean-Baptiste Audebert, who, in his *Histoire naturelle des singes et des makis* (Paris, 1799–1800), asserted that the orangutan was not a type of man, or "une espèce demi-humaine," but rather an animal which "dans l'ordre naturel, se place immédiatement après l'homme" (pp. 12–13). By the early nineteenth century the gulf between orangutans and men once again appeared so wide that some commentators found sufficient room between them to introduce the Negro as an intermediate species—a thesis challenged by Friedrich Tiedemann in his "On the Brain of the Negro, Compared with That of the European and the Orang-Outang," *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society*, 2 (1836): 497–527.

[32]See the *Discours sur l'inégalité*, p. 147, and pp. 216–217, note 12. The orangutan's general promiscuity, however, was so widely taken for granted in the eighteenth century that some critics, such as Jefferson, for example (in his *Notes on the State of Virginia* of 1785), even assumed that the creature was more sexually attracted to Negro women than to females of its own species.

[33]See the *Discours sur l'inégalité*, p. 160, and p. 199, note 5.

[34]Cf. ibid., pp. 159–160, and Wallace, *The Malay Archipelago* (London, 1869), vol. 1, p. 91.

[35]Cf. the *Discours sur l'inégalité*, p. 140; John MacKinnon, "The Behaviour and Ecology of Wild Orang-utans," *Animal Behaviour*, 22 (1974): 51, 65–67; MacKinnon, *In Search of the Red Ape* (London, 1974), p. 64; and Peter Rodman, "Population Composition and Adaptive Organisation among Orang-utans of the Kutai Reserve," in *Comparative Ecology and Behaviour of Primates*, ed. Richard Michael and John Crook (London, 1973), pp. 187, 195–197, 206. MacKinnon's general conclusion (*In Search of the Red Ape*, p. 64) is that the orangutan appears to be "a solitary nomad." According to Rodman (p. 197), "The dispersion of orang-utan populations and the simplicity of social relations within them are both striking and disappointing when compared with the complexity of social structures found among other primates."

[36]See *The Territorial Imperative*, pp. 3, 116, 223, 252–253, and *The Social Contract*, pp. 40, 67, 88.

[37]See the *Discours sur l'inégalité*, p. 135. There are useful accounts of primitive man's forms of nourishment, according to the anthropological theory of Rousseau, in Masters, *The Political Philosophy of Rousseau*, pp. 122–125, and Goldschmidt, *Anthropologie et politique*, pp. 245–256.

[38]*The Hunting Hypothesis*, p. 104.

[39]See *The Social Contract*, p. 275, and *The Hunting Hypothesis*, p. 33. Cf. *African Genesis*, pp. 149–150. Ardrey's reflections on chimpanzees in captivity seem to me particularly odd in the light of his cautionary remarks elsewhere (see *The Territorial Imperative*, p. 215) against our making inferences about natural behavior from the conduct of animals in zoos. In fact, however, there has been evidence, most of it in the past ten years or so, that wild chimpanzees hunt and kill other mammals, including baboons and red colobus monkeys. The fullest treatments of this subject can be found in Jane van Lawick-Goodall, "The Behaviour of Free-living Chimpanzees in the Gombe Stream Reserve," *Animal Behaviour Monographs*, vol. 1 (1968), pp. 161–311, and Geza Teleki, *The Predatory Behavior of Wild Chimpanzees* (Lewisburg, Pa., 1973). In *The Hunting Hypothesis* (see pp. 35–36) Ardrey comments upon some of this evidence, which he admits came as a surprise to him, and he also stresses the importance of a brief report on chimpanzee cannibalism, regarded by its author, though (J. D. Bygott, in *Nature*, 18 August 1972), as either "aberrant behavior" or an unusual "adaptive response to social or ecological pressures." The evidence of chimpanzee predation is, I think, quite inconclusive as well. First, the sightings are still relatively scanty and are mainly from the Gombe Stream Reserve where it may well be, as Teleki suggests, that the recent liquidation of most large terrestrial carnivores has left an unoccupied niche only latterly filled by chimpanzees. Second, both van Lawick-Goodall and Teleki maintain that the hunting activities of chimps provide no more than infrequent supplements to basically vegetarian diets, so that, as Ardrey himself acknowledges, their kills seem to be unrelated to any need for food. Third, they are predators of a highly extraordinary kind, since they more commonly tolerate and intermingle with their prey, young baboons and chimpanzees even often grooming one another. At any rate there is, to my knowledge, no evidence as yet of predation among the other great apes, including the orangutan—except, of course, in zoos.

[40]See, for instance, the remarks of Ashley Montagu in his introduction to the facsimile reprint of *Orang-Outang* (London, 1966), p. 12.

[41]See the following passage from Voltaire's *Dictionnaire philosophique*, article "Luxe," in his *Oeuvres complètes* (Kehl, 1784–89), vol. 41, p. 506, note 3: "Tout ennemi du luxe doit croire avec *Rousseau* que l'état de bonheur & de vertu pour l'homme est celui, non de sauvage, mais d'orang-outang." This statement does not figure in any of the editions of the *Dictionnaire philosophique* published in Voltaire's lifetime, nor in his *Questions sur l'Encyclopédie* frequently incorporated in ex-

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panded versions of the *Dictionnaire*. It ought strictly to have been printed in his *Mélanges*, but several publishers of his works have included it in the format first presented in the Kehl edition. Jeroom Vercruysse, the distinguished Voltaire scholar, has even suggested to me that the passage may not have been drafted by Voltaire himself, though in the absence of any manuscript evidence my guess is that it *is* one of his own compositions. See also Voltaire's letter to Rousseau of 30 August 1755 (*Correspondance complète de Rousseau*, vol. 3, no. 317, pp. 156–162) on his receipt of the copy of the *Discours sur l'inégalité* which Rousseau had sent him.

[42]Thus Aristotle, for instance, remarked in his *Politics* (book 1, chap. 2) that human language was distinct from the mere animal emission of sounds, because instead of signifying pleasures and pains it served to declare what was just and unjust. And Hobbes in his *Leviathan* (chap. 14) observed that "To make Covenants with bruit Beasts, is impossible."

[43]Diderot, *Suite du Rêve de d'Alembert*, in his *Oeuvres complètes*, ed. Jules Assézat and Maurice Tourneux (Paris, 1875–77), vol. 2, p. 190. Jacques Scherer has employed this quotation in the very title of his general study of Diderot's manner of thought and style of literary expression, *Le Cardinal et l'orang-outang: Essai sur les inversions et les distances dans la pensée de Diderot* (Paris, 1972). About the passage itself, he writes (p. 39), "Eclairante et fulgurante parole, qui désigne un seuil, une accession à l'humanité, une solennisation de l'émergence de l'humain par le langage." The *Rêve de d'Alembert*, first published after Diderot's death, dates from 1769.

[44]See especially David Premack, *Intelligence in Ape and Man* (Hillsdale, N.J., 1976), pp. 14–15. Excellent critical accounts of some of the recent experiments in teaching languages to chimpanzees are provided by Roger Brown in "The First Sentences of Child and Chimpanzee," in Brown, *Psycholinguistics: Selected Papers* (New York, 1970), pp. 208–231, as well as in the same author's *A First Language* (London, 1973), pp. 32–51. Despite their differences, both Brown and Premack, I believe, stand quite apart from Ardrey (see *The Hunting Hypothesis*, pp. 33–34) and Eugene Linden (see his *Apes, Men and Language* [New York, 1975], pp. 70–76, 187–188, 215–216), who make much bolder claims about the linguistic capacities of apes and the relation between animal and human systems of communication in general.

[45]Herder, *Abhandlung über den Ursprung der Sprache* (1772), in his *Sämmtliche Werke* (Berlin, 1877–1913), vol. 5, pp. 44–45.

[46]See the *Discours sur l'inégalité*, p. 210, note 10.

[47]See ibid., pp. 146–147.

[48]Cf. Condillac, *Essai sur l'origine des connoissances humaines* (1746), parts 1.ii.4, §§ 35 and 38, 2.i.1, § 6, and 2.i.9, §§ 82–83, in the *Oeuvres philosophiques de Condillac*, ed. Georges Le Roy (Paris, 1947–51), vol. 1, pp. 19, 61, 83; and Rousseau, *Discours sur l'inégalité*, pp. 146–151. I have considered the relation between Rousseau's linguistic philosophy and that of Condillac at length in my *Rousseau's "Discours sur l'inégalité" and Its Sources, Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century* (forthcoming, 1978). On this subject see also Jacques Derrida, "La linguistique de Rousseau," *Revue internationale de philosophie*, 82 (1967): 448–452, and Jean Starobinski, "Rousseau et l'origine des langues," in Starobinski, *Rousseau: La transparence et l'obstacle*, 2nd ed. (Paris, 1971), pp. 360–364.

[49]See Rousseau's *Discours sur l'inégalité*, pp. 125, 132, and his draft version of the *Contrat social* dating from about 1756 (*Manuscrit de Genève*), vol. 3, book 1, chap. 2, p. 284. According to the philosophers of natural law—particularly Grotius and Pufendorf—whom Rousseau challenged in his political writings, individuals in the state of nature must generally have been marked by a *desiderium* or an *appetitus societatis*.

[50]See the *Discours sur l'inégalité*, pp. 162, 168–169, and the *Essai sur l'origine des langues* (probably dating largely from around 1760), ed. Charles Porset, 2nd ed. (Bordeaux, 1970), chap. 9, p. 113.

[51]See the *Discours sur l'inégalité*, pp. 169–170.

[52]See ibid., p. 164; the "Dernière réponse" (1752) to Charles Borde's first *Discours sur les avantages des sciences et des arts* (1751), vol. 3, p. 80; and the preface to *Narcisse* (1753), vol. 2, pp. 969–970, note.

[53]See the *Discours sur l'inégalité*, p. 167.

[54]See ibid., p. 171.

[55]See the *Essai sur l'origine des langues*, chaps. 10 and 11, pp. 129, 131, 135. An illuminating treatment of these passages is provided by Derrida in his *De la grammatologie* (Paris, 1967), pp. 318–322. This work also contains an important chapter on Lévi-Strauss's anthropological linguistics in relation to the ideas of Rousseau on that subject.

[56]See the *Essai sur l'origine des langues*, chap. 19, pp. 189–191.

[57]See ibid., chap. 20, pp. 197–201.

[58]Ibid., chaps. 10 and 20, pp. 131 and 197–199. I have discussed these themes more fully in my "Rameau, Rousseau, and the *Essai sur l'origine des langues*," *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century*, 117 (1974): 220–238, and in "Rousseau on Rameau and Revolution," in *Studies in the Eighteenth Century*, vol. 4, ed. Robert Brissenden and J. Christopher Eade (Canberra, forthcoming, 1978).

[59]See, for instance, Diderot's *Suite de l'Apologie de l'abbé de Prades* (1752), in his *Oeuvres complètes*, vol. 1, p. 467. For Rousseau's use of the expression *Peuples policés*, see his *Discours sur les sciences et les arts* (1751), vol. 3, p. 7.

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[60]Rousseau, *Confessions* (drafted mainly in the mid to late 1760s), vol. 1, p. 404. Cf. his preface to *Narcisse*, p. 969, and his *Discours sur l'économie politique* (1755), vol. 3, p. 251.

[61]Rousseau, *Contrat social* (1762), vol. 3, book 3, chap. 9, p. 420, note. The quotation is from Tacitus, *Agricola*, 21.

[62]Edward Wilson, *Sociobiology: The New Synthesis* (Cambridge, Mass., 1975), pp. 168, 560.

[63]See, for example, the *Contrat social*, book 2, chap. 12, p. 394.

[64]*Discours sur l'inégalité*, pp. 212–213, note 10. See also the section of the fifth book of *Emile* (1762) which Rousseau entitled "Des Voyages" (vol. 4, p. 826). For accounts of his intellectual debt to the travel literature on exotic nations available in the eighteenth century, see especially Gilbert Chinard, *L'Amérique et le rêve exotique dans la littérature française au XVII^e et au XIII^e siècle* (Paris 1913), pp. 341–365, and Georges Pire, "Rousseau et les relations de voyages," *Revue d'Histoire littéraire de la France*, 56 (1956): 355–378. The best general study of the significance which was attached in the Enlightenment to such expeditions is provided by Duchet in her *Anthropologie et Histoire au siècle des lumières*, pp. 25–226.

[65]See, for instance, Dobzhansky, *Mankind Evolving*, pp. 18–22; *Evolution and Culture*, ed. Marshall Sahlins and Elman Service (Ann Arbor, Mich., 1960), chaps. 4 and 5; and Tiger and Fox, *The Imperial Animal*, pp. 37–38.

[66]This proposition has been advanced by Konrad Lorenz, among others, in his *On Aggression* (London, 1967), p. 224.

[67]See Masters, "Genes, Language, and Evolution," *Semiotica*, 2 (1970): 304–313.

[68]See the *Discours sur l'inégalité*, p. 171.

[69]Masters, "Genes, Language, and Evolution," p. 309.

[70]In *Rousseau: La transparence et l'obstacle* (see especially pp. 22–33, 84–87, 194, 315–316), Starobinski provides an eloquent interpretation of almost the whole of Rousseau's thought in the light of his explicit and implied views on the nature of transparency and obfuscation in human affairs.

[71]*Discours sur les sciences et les arts*, p. 7. A perceptive treatment of this passage in the context of Rousseau's general contempt for the *amour-propre* of intellectuals is supplied by Judith Shklar in her *Men and Citizens: A Study of Rousseau's Social Theory* (Cambridge, 1969), pp. 109–112.

[72]*Discours sur l'inégalité*, p. 138. These lines contrast sharply with the following statement made by Diderot in his article "Droit naturel" for the fifth volume (1755) of the *Encyclopédie* (*Oeuvres complètes*, vol. 14, p. 301): "Celui qui ne veut pas raisonner, renonçant à la qualité d'homme, doit être traité comme un être dénaturé."

[73]Geertz, "The Cerebral Savage: On the Work of Lévi-Strauss," in *The Interpretation of Cultures*, p. 355.

[74]Lévi-Strauss, *La Pensée sauvage* (Paris, 1962), pp. 326–327. The quotation is from Rousseau's *Essai sur l'origine des langues*, chap. 8, p. 89.

[75]*Confessions*, p. 3.

[76]*Manuscrit de Genève*, book 1, chap. 2, pp. 286, 287, 288.

[77]*La Pensée sauvage*, pp. 326, 327. In an article entitled "The Social Anthropology of Rousseau's *Emile*," *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century*, 132 (1974): 137–181, Godelieve Mercken-Spaas labors under what I take to be a misapprehension that Rousseau offered an account of the universal attributes of man which is similar, even "identical," to that of Levi-Strauss. The passages from *Emile* which she cites refer to generic (and sentimental) constants of human nature that Rousseau supposed were always masked and distorted by culture, whereas Lévi-Strauss regards cultural systems as symbolic manifestations of our uniform mental categories.

[78]Sahlins, *The Use and Abuse of Biology* (London, 1977), p. 15.

[79]*The Social Contract*, p. 101.

[80]*Discours sur les sciences et les arts*, p. 20, and *Discours sur l'inégalité*, pp. 154, 182, 183.

[81]Rousseau referred explicitly to documented evidence of human encounters with vampires in his *Lettre à Christophe de Beaumont* (1763), vol. 4, p. 987, and in the first draft of *Emile*, that is, the *Manuscrit Favre*, probably dating from 1758–59 (see *La "Profession de foi du Vicaire savoyard" de Rousseau*, ed. Pierre-Maurice Masson [Fribourg and Paris, 1914], pp. 331, note 3, and 332). In the *Manuscrit Favre*, vol. 4, p. 231, he also commented upon "les monstres de l'imagination" conceived by tormented and degraded men who lead "une vie molle et sedentaire." For his accounts of the demonic nature of religion in general, and of priests that savor the deaths of the individuals they tend in particular, see especially his letter to Voltaire of 18 August 1756, *Correspondance complète de Rousseau*, vol. 4, no. 424, p. 40; the *Manuscrit Favre*, pp. 227–228; and *La Nouvelle Héloïse* (1761), vol. 2, part 6, letter 11, pp. 717–718. I am most grateful to Christopher Frayling, a leading authority on eighteenth-century vampirism, for his permission to incorporate here a few sentences from our unpublished paper on orangutans and vampires in Rousseau's anthropology, presented at the XVth International Congress of the History of Science, Edinburgh, August 1977.

[82]*Le Totémisme aujourd'hui*, p. 145. See also his "Jean-Jacques Rousseau, fondateur des sciences de l'homme," pp. 243–244.

[83]See the *Discours sur l'inégalité*, p. 154.

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[84]See ibid., pp. 136–137, 141, and p. 219, note 15.

[85]See ibid., p. 142.

[86]See ibid, pp. 131, 141, 157–158.

[87]See *African Genesis*, p. 256.

[88]See the *Discours sur l'inégalité*, pp. 134, 137, and pp. 196–198, note 3. In his treatment of these passages Goldschmidt (see *Anthropologie et politique*, pp. 240–245) contends—mistakenly, I believe—that Rousseau's account of bipedal man precluded the possibility of human evolution in his philosophy.

[89]Over the past several years allometry has become a very fashionable subject of speculation in genetic theory. One of the best introductions to the idea is provided by Bernhard Rensch in his *Evolution above the Species Level* (London, 1959), pp. 133–169.

[90]See, for instance, Ralph Holloway, Jr., "Cranial Capacity and the Evolution of the Human Brain," in *Culture: Man's Adaptive Dimension*, pp. 178, 183.

[91]Foster to Samuel Thomas von Sömmerring, 19 May 1785, quoted in Hugh Nisbet, *Herder and the Philosophy and History of Science* (Cambridge, 1970), p. 250.

[92]*Discours sur l'inégalité*, p. 142. See also Rousseau's letter to Voltaire of 18 August 1756, *Correspondance complète de Rousseau*, vol. 4, p. 39, and note *b*, ibid., p. 65.

[93]The term was not only "brought into vogue" by Rousseau, as John Passmore reports in *The Perfectibility of Man* (London, 1970), p. 179, for, aside from a hint that it may have been employed in conversation by Turgot from around 1750, there is no recorded instance of its use at all, in any European language, prior to that of the *Discours sur l'inégalité*. As Starobinski has established (see vol. 3, pp. 1317–1318), its appearance in the issue of Grimm's *Correspondance littéraire* of 15 February 1755 implies little more than that Grimm was likely to have had an advance viewing of the manuscript of the *Discours*, already in the hands of its publisher the previous autumn. Starobinski notes, moreover, that the term was not incorporated in the fourth (1762) edition of the *Dictionnaire de l'Académie française*, though it appears in the fifth edition (of 1798–99), and he traces its first mention in a work of reference to the *Dictionnaire de Trévoux* of 1771.

[94]Starobinski, *Rousseau: La transparence et l'obstacle*, p. 24.

[95]See, for instance, the *Contrat social*, book 2, chap. 8, p. 385.

[96]Frances Power Cobbe, *The Life of Frances Power Cobbe by Herself*, 3rd ed. (London, 1894), vol. 2, p. 244, quoted in Brian Harrison, "Animals and the State in Nineteenth-Century England," *English Historical Review*, 88 (1973): 804.

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ALLAN BLOOM

The Education of Democratic Man: *Emile*

IN THE *Discourse on the Origins of Inequality* Rousseau summons men to hear for the first time the true history of their species.[1] Man was born free, equal, self-sufficient, unprejudiced, and whole; now, at the end of history, he is in chains (ruled by other men or by laws he did not make), defined by relations of inequality (rich or poor, noble or commoner, master or slave), dependent, full of false opinions or superstitions, and divided between his inclinations and his duties. Nature made man a brute, but happy and good. History—and man is the only animal with a history—by the development of his faculties and the progress of his mind has made man civilized, but unhappy and immoral. History is not a theodicy but a tale of misery and corruption.

Emile, on the other hand, has a happy ending, and Rousseau says he cares little if men take it to be only a novel, for it ought, he says, to be the history of his species.[2] And therewith he provides the key to *Emile*. It is, as Kant says,[3] the work which attempts to reconcile nature with history, man's selfish nature with the demands of civil society, hence, inclination with duty. Man requires a healing education which returns him to himself. Rousseau's paradoxes—his attack on the arts and the sciences and his practice of them, his praise of the savage and natural freedom over against his advocacy of the ancient city, the general will and virtue, his perplexing presentations of himself as citizen, lover, and solitary—are not expressions of a troubled soul but accurate reflections of an incoherence in the structure of the world we all face, or rather, in general, do not face; and *Emile* is an experiment in restoring harmony to that world by reordering the emergence of man's acquisitions in such a way as to avoid the imbalances created by them, while allowing the full actualization of man's potential. Rousseau believed that his was a privileged moment, a moment when all of man's faculties had revealed themselves and when man had, furthermore, attained for the first time knowledge of the principles of human nature. *Emile* is the canvas on which Rousseau tried to paint all of the soul's acquired passions and learning articulated in such a way as to cohere with man's natural wholeness. It is a *Phenomenology of the Mind* posing as Dr. Spock.

Thus *Emile* is one of those rare total or synoptic books, a book with which one can live and which becomes deeper as one becomes deeper, a book comparable to Plato's *Republic*, which it is meant to rival or supersede.[4] But it is not recognized as such in spite of Rousseau's own judgment that it was his best book and Kant's sentiment that its publication was an event comparable to the

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French Revolution. Of his major works it is the least studied or commented on. It is as though its force had been entirely spent on impact with men like Kant and Schiller, leaving only the somewhat cranky residue for which the book retains its fame in teacher training schools—the harangues against swaddling and in favor of breast feeding and the learning of a trade. Whatever the reasons for its loss of favor (and this would make an interesting study) *Emile* merits advocacy for it is a truly great book, one which lays out for the first time and with the greatest clarity and vitality the modern way of posing the problems of psychology.

By this I mean that Rousseau is at the source of the tradition which replaces virtue and vice as the causes of a man's being good or bad, happy or miserable, with such pairs of opposites as sincere/insincere, authentic/inauthentic, inner-directed/other-directed, real self/alienated self. All these have their source in Rousseau's analysis of *amour de soi* and *amour-propre*, a division within man's soul resulting from man's bodily and spiritual dependence on other men which ruptures his original unity or wholeness. This distinction is supposed to give the true explanation of the tension within man which had in the past been understood to be a result of the opposed and irreconcilable demands of the body and the soul. *Emile* gives the comprehensive account of the genesis of *amour-propre*, displays its rich and multifarious phenomena (spreads the peacock's tail, as it were), and maps man's road back to himself from his spiritual exile (his history) during which he wandered through nature and society, a return to himself which incorporates into his substance all the cumbersome treasures he gathered en route. This analysis supersedes that based on the distinction between body and soul—which in its turn had activated the quest for virtue, the taming and controlling of the body's desires under the guidance of the soul's reason—and initiates the great longing to be one's self and the hatred of alienation which characterizes all modern thought. The wholeness, unity, or singleness of man—a project ironically outlined in the *Republic*—is the serious intention of *Emile* and almost all that came afterward.

Emile is written in defense of man against a great threat which bids fair to cause a permanent debasement of the species. That threat is the apparently almost inevitable universal dominance of a certain low human type which Rousseau was the first to isolate and name: the *bourgeois*. Rousseau's enemy was not the ancien régime, its throne, its altar, or its nobility. He was certain that all that was finished, that the inner conviction had left the ancien régime and that revolution would shortly sweep it away to make room for a new world based on the egalitarian principles of the new philosophy. The struggle would concern the kind of man who was going to inhabit that world, for the striking element of the situation was and is that the menace comes from a low human consequence of a true theoretical insight. The bourgeois is the incarnation of the political science of Hobbes and Locke, the first principles of which Rousseau accepted. Here Tocqueville's scheme in *Democracy in America*, which is adopted from Rousseau, casts light on his intention. Equality is now almost a providential fact; no one believes any longer in the justice of the principles on which the old distinctions between ranks or classes were made and which were the basis of the old regime. The only question remaining is whether universal tyranny will re-

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sult or freedom can accompany equality. It is to the formation of free men and free communities founded on egalitarian principles to which Rousseau and Tocqueville are dedicated.

Now, who, according to Rousseau, is the bourgeois? Most simply, following Hegel's formula, he is the man motivated by fear of violent death, the man whose primary concern is preservation or comfortable preservation. Or, to describe the inner workings of his soul, he is the man who, when dealing with others, thinks only of himself, and, in his understanding of himself, thinks only of others. He is a role-player. The bourgeois is contrasted by Rousseau, on the one hand, with the natural man, who is whole and simply concerned with himself, and with the citizen, on the other, whose very being consists in his relation to his city, who understands his good to be identical with the common good. The bourgeois distinguishes his own good from the common good, but his good requires society, and hence he exploits others while depending on them. He must define himself in relation to them. The bourgeois comes to be when men no longer believe that there is a common good, when the notion of the fatherland decays. Rousseau hints that he follows Machiavelli in attributing this decay to Christianity, which promised the heavenly fatherland and thereby took away the supports from the earthly fatherland, leaving social men who have no reason to sacrifice private desire to public duty.

What Christianity revealed, modern philosophy gave an account of: man is not naturally a political being; he has no inclination toward justice. By nature he cares only for his own preservation, and all of his faculties are directed to that end. Men are naturally free and equal in the decisive respects: they have no known authority over them, and they all pursue the same independent end. Men have a natural right to do what conduces to their preservation. All of this Rousseau holds to be true. He differs only in that he does not believe that the duty to obey the laws of civil society can be derived from self-interest. Hobbes and Locke burdened self-interest with more than it can bear; in every decisive instance the sacrifice of the public to the private follows from nature. They produced hypocrites who make promises they cannot intend to keep and who feign concern for others out of concern for themselves, thus using others as means to their ends and alienating themselves. Civil society becomes merely the combat zone for the pursuit of power—control over things and especially over men. With enlightenment the illusions are dispelled, and men learn that they care about life more than country, family, friendship, or honor. Fanaticism, although dangerous and distorting, could at least produce selfless and extraordinary deeds. But now it gives way to calculation. And pride, although the spur to domination, is allied with that noble indifference to life which seems the condition of freedom and the resistance to tyranny. But quenched by fear, pride gives way to vanity, the concern for petty advantages over others. This diminishing of man is the apparent result of enlightenment about his true nature.

In response to this challenge Rousseau undertakes a rethinking of man's nature in its relation to the need for society which history has engendered. What he attempts is to present an egalitarian politics which can rival Plato's politics in moral appeal rather than one which debases man for the sake of the will-of-the-wisp, security. He takes an ordinary boy and experiments with the possibility of his becoming an autonomous man—morally and intellectually independent,

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as was Plato's philosopher-king, an admittedly rare, and hence aristocratic, human type. The success of this venture would prove the dignity of man as man, of all normal men, and thus provide a high-level ground for the choice of democracy. Since Rousseau, overcoming of the bourgeois has been regarded as almost identical with the problem of the realization of true democracy and the achievement of "genuine personality."

The foregoing reflections give a clue to the literary character of *Emile*. The two great moral-political traditions displaced by the modern natural right teachings were accompanied by great works of what may loosely be called poetry. This poetry depicts great human types who embody the alternative visions of the right way of life, who make that way of life plausible, who excite admiration and emulation. The Bible, on the highest level, gives us prophets and saints; and in the realm of ordinary possibility it gives us the pious man. Homer and Plutarch give us, at the peak, heroes; and, for everyday fare, gentlemen. But modern philosophy could not inspire a great poetry corresponding to itself. The man whom it produced is too contemptible for the noble Muse; he can never be a model for those who love the beautiful. This failing is symptomatic of the maiming of man effected by the prosaic new philosophy. Rousseau picks up the challenge and dares to enter into competition with the greatest of the old poets. He creates a human type whose charms can rival those of the saint or the tragic hero, the natural man, and thereby shows that his thought can comprehend the beautiful in man.

Emile consists of a series of stories, and its teaching comes to light only when one has grasped each in its complex detail and artistic unity. Interpretation of this first *Bildungsroman* requires a union of *l'esprit de géométrie* and *l'esprit de finesse*, a union which it both typifies and teaches. It is impossible here to do more than indicate the plan of the work and tentatively describe its general intention in the hope of convincing others how imperative it is to study this work.

I

Emile is divided into two large segments. Books I–III are devoted to the rearing of a civilized savage, a man who cares only about himself, who is independent and self-sufficient and on whom no duties are imposed that run counter to his inclinations and divide him, whose knowledge of the crafts and the sciences does not involve his incorporation into the system of public opinion and division of labor. Books IV–V attempt to bring this atomic individual into human society and toward moral responsibility on the basis of his inclinations and his generosity.

Rousseau's intention in the first segment comes most clearly to light in its culmination when Jean-Jacques, the tutor, gives his pupil the first and only book he is to read prior to early adulthood. Before presenting his gift, Jean-Jacques expresses to the reader the general sentiment that he hates all books—including implicitly and especially the book of books, the guide of belief and conduct, the Bible. Books act as intermediaries between men and things; they attach men to the opinions of others rather than making them understand on

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their own or leaving them in ignorance. They excite the imagination, increasing thereby the desires, the hopes, and the fears beyond the realm of the necessary. All the early rearing is an elaborate attempt to avoid the emergence of the imagination which, according to the *Discourse on the Origins of Inequality*, is the faculty that turns man's intellectual progress into the source of his misery. But, in spite of this general injunction against books and in direct contradiction to what he has just said, Rousseau does introduce a book, one which presents a new teaching and a new mode of teaching. The book is *Robinson Crusoe*, and it is not meant to be merely a harmless amusement for Emile but to provide him with a vision of the whole and a standard for the judgment of both things and men.[5]

Robinson Crusoe is a solitary man in the state of nature, outside of civil society and unaffected by the deeds or opinions of men. His sole concern is his preservation and comfort. All his strength and reason are dedicated to those ends, and utility is his guiding principle, one which organizes all his knowledge. The world he sees contains neither gods nor heroes; there are no conventions. Neither the memory of Eden nor the hope of salvation affect his judgment. Nature and natural needs are all that is of concern to him. *Robinson Crusoe* is a kind of Bible of the new science of nature and reveals man's true original condition.

This novel provides, moreover, a new kind of play for the first activity of the imagination. In the first place, the boy does not imagine beings or places which do not exist. He imagines himself in situations and subject to necessities which are part of his experience. Actually his imagination divests itself of the imaginary beings that seem so real in ordinary society and are of human making. He sees himself outside of the differences of nation and religion which cover over nature and are the themes of ordinary poetry. Second, he does not meet with heroes to whom he must subject himself or whom he is tempted to rival. Every man can be Crusoe and actually is Crusoe to the extent that he tries to be simply man. Crusoe's example does not alienate Emile from himself as do the other fictions of poetry; it helps him to be himself. He understands his hero's motives perfectly and does not ape deeds the reasons for which he cannot imagine.

A boy, who imagining himself alone on an island uses all of his energy in thinking about what he needs to survive and how to procure it, will have a reason for all his learning; its relevance to what counts is assured; and the fear, reward, or vanity that motivate ordinary education are not needed. Nothing will be accepted on authority; the evidence of his senses and the call of his desires will be his authorities. Emile, lost in a woods and hungry, finds his way home to lunch by his knowledge of astronomy. For him astronomy is not a discipline forced on him by his teachers, or made attractive by the opportunity to show off, or an expression of his superstition. Thus Rousseau shows how the sciences which historically made men more dependent on one another can serve their independence. Thus the Emile who moves in civil society will put different values on things and activities than do other men. The division of labor which produces superfluity and makes men partial—pieces of a great machine—will seem like a prison, and an unnecessary prison, to him. He will treasure his wholeness. He will know real value, which is the inverse of the value given things by the vanity of social men. And he will respect the producers of real value and despise the producers of value founded on vanity. Nature will be

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always present to him, not as doctrine but as a part of his very senses. This novel, properly prepared for and used, teaches him the use of the sciences and makes him inwardly free in spite of society's constraints.

And this constitutes Rousseau's response to Plato. Plato said that all men always begin by being prisoners in the cave. The cave is the condition of survival resulting from being a member of civil society. The needs, fears, hopes, and indignations of mutually dependent men produce a network of opinions and myths which make communal life possible and give it meaning. Men never experience nature directly but always mix their beliefs into what they see. Liberation from the cave requires the discovery of nature under the many layers of convention, the separating out of what is natural from what is man-made. Only a genius is capable of attaining a standpoint from which he can see the cave as a cave. That is why the philosopher, the rarest human type, can alone be autonomous and free of prejudice. Now, Rousseau agrees that once in the cave, genius is required to emerge from it. He, too, agrees that enlightenment is spurious and merely the substitution of one prejudice for another. He himself was born in a cave and had to be a genius to attain his insight into the human condition. His life is a testimony to the heroic character of the quest for nature. But he denies that the cave is natural. The right kind of education, one independent of society, can put a child into direct contact with nature without the intermixture of opinion. Plato purified poetry so as to make its view of the world less hostile to reason, and he replaced the ordinary lies by a noble lie. Rousseau banishes poetry altogether and suppresses all lies. At most he gives Emile Robinson Crusoe, who is not an other but only himself. Above all, no gods. Emile, at the age of fifteen, has a standpoint outside of civil society, one fixed by his inclinations and his reason, from which he sees that his fellow men are prisoners in a cave and by which he is freed from any temptation to fear the punishments or seek the honors which are part of it. Rousseau, the genius, has made it possible for ordinary men to be free, and in this way he proves in principle the justice of democracy.

Thus Rousseau's education of the young Emile confines itself to fostering the development of the faculties immediately connected with his preservation. His desire for the pleasant and avoidance of the painful is given by nature. His senses are the natural means to those ends. And the physical sciences, like mathematics, physics, and astronomy, are human contrivances which, if solidly grounded on the pure experience of the senses, extend their range and protect them against the errors of imagination. The tutor's responsibility is, in the first place, to let the senses develop in relation to their proper objects; and, secondly, to encourage the learning of the sciences as the almost natural outcome of the use of the senses. Rousseau calls this tutelage, particularly with reference to the part that has to do with the senses, negative education. All animals go through a similar apprenticeship to life. But with man something intervenes which impedes or distorts nature's progress, and therefore a specifically negative education, a human effort, is required. This new factor is the growth of the passions, particularly fear of death and *amour-propre*. They—fed by imagination and intermingling with the desires and the senses—transform judgment and cause a special kind of merely human, or mythical, interpretation of the world. The negative education means specifically the tutor's artifices invented to prevent the

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emergence of these two passions which attach men to one another and to opinions.

With respect to fear of death, Rousseau flatly denies that man does naturally fear death, and hence denies the premise of Hobbes's political philosophy (as well as what appears to be the common opinion of all political thinkers). He does not disagree with the modern natural right thinkers that man's only natural vocation is self-preservation or that he seeks to avoid pain. But Rousseau insists that man is not at first aware of the meaning of death, nor does man change his beliefs or ways of life to avoid it. Death, as Hobbes's man sees it, is a product of the imagination; and only on the basis of that imagination will he give up his natural idle and pleasure-loving life in order to pursue power after power so as to forestall death's assaults. The conception that life can be extinguished turns life, which is the condition of living, into an end itself. No animal is capable of such a conception, and, therefore, no animal thus transforms his life. Rousseau suggests that a man can be kept at the animal's unconscious level in regard to death long enough for him to have established a fixed and unchanging positive way of life and be accustomed to pain as well as knowledgeable enough not to be overwhelmed by the fact of death when he becomes fully aware of it. Ordinarily fear of death leads to one of two possible responses: superstition or the attempt to conquer death. The first gives hope that gods will protect men here or provide them with another life. The second, that of the enlightenment, uses science to prolong life and establish solid political regimes, putting off the inevitable and absorbing men in the holding action. Neither faces the fact of death, and both pervert consciousness. This is what Socrates meant by the dictum that philosophy is "learning how to die." All men die, and many die boldly or resolutely. But practically none does so without illusion. Those illusions constitute the horizon of the cave whose conventions are designed to support human hopes and fears. Thus to know how to die is equivalent to being liberated from the cave. And Rousseau, who argues that there is no natural cave, therefore also concludes that men naturally know how to die. "Priests, doctors and philosophers unlearn us how to die."[6] He does not suggest that every savage or every baby has meditated on death as did Socrates. He means that, naturally, every man has none of the illusions about death which pervert life and require the Socratic effort. The tutor's function is to forestall the ministrations of priests, doctors, and philosophers which engender and nourish the fear of death. The simple lesson is that man must rely on himself and recognize and accept necessity; Rousseau shows how this can be achieved without the exercise of the rarest virtues.

Although fear of death makes it difficult to accept necessity, it is *amour-propre* that makes it difficult to recognize necessity. This is the murky passion that accounts for the "interesting" relationships men have with one another, and it is the keystone of Rousseau's psychological teaching. The primary intention of the negative education is to prevent *amour de soi* from turning into *amour-propre*, for this is the true source of man's dividedness. Rousseau's treatment of this all-important theme is best introduced by his discussion of the meaning of a baby's tears.[7]

Tears are a baby's language and naturally express physical discomfort and are pleas for help. The parent or nurse responds by satisfying a real need, either

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feeding the baby or removing the source of pain. But at some point the child is likely to recognize that his tears have the effect of making things serve him through the intermediary of adults. The world responds to his wishes. His will can make things move to satisfy his desires. At this point the baby loses interest in providing himself with things; his inner motive to become strong enough to get the things for himself which others now provide for him is transformed into a desire to control the instrument which provides him with those things. His concern with his physical needs is transformed into a passion to control the will of adults. His tears become commands and frequently no longer are related to his real needs but only to testing his power. He cannot stop it from raining by crying, but he can make an adult change his mind. He becomes aware of will; and he knows that wills, as opposed to necessity, are subject to command, that they are changing. He quickly learns that, for his life, control over men is more useful than adaptation to things. Therefore the disposition of adults towards him replaces his bodily needs as his primary concern. Every wish that is not fulfilled could, in his imagination, be fulfilled if the adult only willed it that way. His experience of his own will teaches him that others' wills are selfish and plastic. He therefore seeks for power over men rather than the use of things. He becomes a skillful psychologist, able to manipulate others.

With the possibility of change of wills emerges the justification of blame and hence of anger. Nature does not have intentions; men do. Anger is caused by intentional wrong, and the child learns to see intention to do wrong in what opposes him. He becomes an avenger. A squalling brat is most often testing his power. If he gets what he wants, he is a master. If he fails, he is angry, resentful, and likely to become slavish. In either event he has entered into a dialectic of mastery and slavery which will occupy him for his whole life. His natural and healthy self-love and self-esteem (*amour de soi*), gives way to a self-love relative to other men's opinions of him; henceforth he can esteem himself only if others esteem him. Ultimately he makes the impossible demand that others care for him more than they care for themselves. The most interesting of psychological phenomena is this doubling or dividing of self-love; it is one of the few distinctively human phenomena (no animal can be insulted); and from it flow anger, pride, vanity, resentment, revenge, jealousy, indignation, competition, slavishness, humility, capriciousness, rebelliousness, and almost all the other passions that give poets their themes. In these first seeds of *amour-propre* as seen in tears, one can recognize the source of the human problem.

Rousseau's solution to *amour-propre*, which would seem inevitably to lead to conflict among men, their using one another as means to their own ends, and the need for government and law, is, as with the fear of death, to prevent, at least for a long time, its emergence; no self-overcomings are required. The child must be dependent on things and not on wills. The tutor and his helpers must disappear, as it were, and everything that happens to the child must seem to be an inevitable effect of nature. Against necessity he will not rebel; it is only the possibility of overcoming necessity or the notion that there is a will lurking behind it which disturbs his unclouded relation to things as they are. It is the intermediary of human beings in the satisfaction of need that causes the problem.

Now all of this has even more significance than is immediately apparent, for Rousseau suggests that superstition, all attribution of intention to inanimate

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things or to the world as a whole, is a result of the early experience of will. The parent in moving things at the child's command gives the child the impression that all things are moved by intention and that command or prayer can put them at man's disposal. Moreover, anger itself animates. The child who is angry at what does not bend to his will attributes a will to it. This is the case with all anger, as a moment's reflection will show. Anger is allied with and has its origin in *amour-propre*. Once it is activated, it finds intention and responsibility everywhere. Finally it animates rivers, storms, the heavens, and all sorts of benevolent and malevolent beings. It moralizes the universe in the service of *amour-propre*. In early childhood, there is a choice: the child can see everything or nothing as possessing a will like his own. Either whim or necessity governs the world for him. Neither is true, but for the child, the latter is the more salutary because nature is necessity and the primary things are necessary. The passions must submit to necessity, whereas necessity cannot be changed by the passions.[8] Before he comes to terms with will, a man must have understood and accepted necessity. Otherwise he is likely to spend his life obeying and fearing gods or trying to become one. Rousseau, unlike more recent proponents of freedom, recognized that without necessity the realm of freedom can have no meaning.

Rousseau's teaching about *amour-propre* goes to the heart of his disagreement with Plato, who had argued that something akin to what Rousseau calls *amour-propre* is an independent part of the soul. This is *thymos*, spiritedness, or simply anger. It is the motive of his warriors in the *Republic* and is best embodied in Achilles, who is almost entirely *thymos*. Plato was aware of all the dangers of *thymos*, but he insisted that it must be given its due because it is part of human nature, because it can be the instrument for restraining desire, and because it is connected with a noble and useful human type. Simply, it is *thymos* that makes men overcome their natural fear of death. Rather than excise it, he attempted to tame this lion in the soul. The education in Books II–III of the *Republic* suggests the means to make it gentle and submissive to reason. However, these warriors do require myths and noble lies. They are cave dwellers. Man naturally animates the universe and tries to make it responsive to his demands and blames it for resisting. Plato focuses on Achilles, who struggles with a river which he takes to be a god, just as Rousseau is fascinated by the madness of Xerxes, who beats a recalcitrant sea.[9] These are the extreme but most revealing instances of the passion to rule. The difference between Plato and Rousseau on this crucial point comes down to whether anger is natural or derivative. Rousseau says that a child who is not corrupted and wants a cookie will never rebel against the phrase, "there are no more," but only against, "you cannot have one." Plato insists that this is not so. Men naturally see intention where there is none and must become wise in order to separate will from necessity in nature. They do, however, both agree that *thymos* is an important part of the spiritual economy, and that, once present, it must be treated with the greatest respect. Herein they differ from Hobbes, who simply doused this great cause of war with buckets of fear, extinguishing thus the soul's fire. Rousseau gives a complete account of pride and its uses and abuses, whereas other modern psychologists have either lost sight of it or tried to explain it away. Our education does not take it seriously, and we risk producing timid souls, or ones whose untrained spiritedness is wildly erratic and seeks dangerous outlets.

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Given that the child must never confront other wills, he cannot be given commandments. He would not understand even the most reasonable restriction on his will as anything other than the expression of the selfishness of the one who gives the commandments. The child must always do what he wants to do. This is the dictum of progressive education, and Rousseau is rightly seen as its source. What is forgotten is that Rousseau's full formula is that the child must always do what he wants to do but he should want to do only what the tutor wants him to do.[10] Since an uncorrupt will does not rebel against necessity, and the tutor can manipulate the appearance of necessity, he can determine the will without sowing the seeds of resentment. He presents natural necessity in palpable form to the child so that the child lives according to nature prior to understanding it.

Rousseau demonstrates this method in a story which shows how he improves on earlier moral teachings.[11] He puts his Emile in a garden where there are no noes, no forbidden fruit, and no fall, and tries to show that in the end his pupil will be healthy, whole, and of a purer morality than the old Adam. He gets Emile to respect the fruit of another without tempting him.

The boy is induced to plant some beans as a kind of game. His curiosity, imitativeness, and childish energy are used to put him to the task. He watches the beans grow while Jean-Jacques orates to him, supporting him in the pleasure he feels at seeing the result of his work, and encouraging him in the sense that the beans are his. Jean-Jacques gives Emile a rationale for that sense. The speech does not bore him as a sermon would, because it supports his inclination instead of opposing it. Jean-Jacques gives him what is in essence Locke's teaching on property. The beans belong to Emile because he has mixed his labor with them. Jean-Jacques begins by teaching him his right to his beans rather than by commanding him to respect the fruits of others.

Once the child has a clear notion of what belongs to him, he has his first experience of injustice done to him. One day he finds that his beans have been plowed under. And therewith he also has his first experience of anger, in the form of righteous indignation. He seeks the guilty party with the intention of punishing him. His selfish concern is identical with his concern for justice. But, much to his surprise, he finds that the criminal considers himself to be the injured party and is equally angry with him. It is the gardener, and he had planted seeds for melons—melons that were to be eaten by Emile—and Emile had plowed under those seeds to plant his beans. Here we have will against will, anger against anger. Although Emile's wrath loses some of its force—inasmuch as the gardener has an even better claim to have right on his side (he was the first occupant), and this according to the very notion of right which Emile uses and which he so eagerly imbibed from Jean-Jacques—the situation could lead to war. But Jean-Jacques avoids that outcome by means of two strategems. First, Emile's attention is diverted from his beans by the thought of the rare melons he would have enjoyed. Second, a kind of social contract is arranged: in the future Emile will stay away from the gardener's lands, if he is granted a small plot for his beans. In this way the boy is induced to understand and respect the property of others without losing anything of his own. If there were a conflict of interest, Emile would naturally prefer his own. But Jean-Jacques does not put him in that position. If Emile were commanded to keep away from what he desires, the

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one who commanded him to do so would be responsible for setting him against himself and encouraging him to deceive. A luscious fruit in the garden which was forbidden would only set the selfish will of the owner against Emile's nature. Jean-Jacques at least gives Emile grounds for respecting property and brings him as close to an obligation as can be grounded on mere nature. Greater demands at this stage would be both ineffective and corrupting. The tempter is the giver of commandments. Rousseau here follows Hobbes in deriving duties, or approximations to them, from rights. In this way Emile will rarely infringe the rights of others, and he will have no intention to harm them.

It is this latter that constitutes the morality of the natural man and also that of the wise man (according to Rousseau).[12] It takes the place of the Christian's Golden Rule. When Rousseau says that man is by nature good, he means that man, concerned only with his own well-being, does not naturally have to compete with other men (scarcity is primarily a result of extended desire), nor does he care for their opinions (and, hence, he does not need to try to force them to respect him). Man's goodness is identical to his natural freedom (of body and soul) and equality. And here he agrees, contrary to the conventional wisdom, with Machiavelli, who said men are all bad. For Machiavelli meant that men are bad when judged from the standpoint of the common good, or of how men ought to live, or of the imaginary cities of the old writers. These make demands on men contrary to their natural inclinations and are therefore both unfounded and ineffective. If these standards are removed and men's inclinations are accepted rather than blamed, it turns out that with the cooperation of these inclinations sound regimes can be attained. From the standpoint of imaginary perfection man's passions are bad; from that of the natural passion for self-preservation they are good. Machiavelli preaches the adoption of the latter standpoint and the abandonment of all transcendence and with it the traditional dualism. And it is this project of reconciliation with what is that Rousseau completes in justifying the wholeness of self-concern, in proving that the principles of the old morality are not only ineffective but the cause of corruption (since they cause men to deny themselves and thus to become hypocrites), and in learning how to control that imagination which gives birth to the imaginary cities (which, in their opposition to the real cities, are the signs of man's dividedness).

The moral education of the young Emile is, then, limited to the effective establishment of the rule that he should harm no one. And this moral rule cooperates with the intellectual rule that he should know how to be ignorant. This latter means that only clear and distinct evidence should ever command belief. Neither any passions nor dependencies should make him need to believe. All his knowledge should be relevant to his real needs, which are small and easily satisfied. In a sense he makes his young Emile an embodiment of the Enlightenment's new scientific method. His will to affirm never exceeds his capacity to prove. For others, that method is only a tool, liable to the abuses of the passions and counterpoised by many powerful needs. All this is described in the *Discourse on the Arts and Sciences.* But to Emile, whose only desire is to know and live according to the necessary, the new science of the laws of nature is a perfect complement. With a solid floor constituted by healthy senses in which he trusts and a ceiling provided by astronomy, Emile is now prepared to admit

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his fellows into a structure which their tempestuous passions cannot shake. This fifteen-year-old, who has not unlearned how to die, harms no one, and knows how to be ignorant, possesses a large share of the Socratic wisdom.

II

Emile at fifteen cares no more for his father than his dog. A child who did would be motivated by fear or gain induced by dependency. Rousseau has made Emile free of those passions by keeping him self-sufficient, and he has thus undermined the economic foundations of civil society laid by Hobbes and Locke. Since Rousseau agrees with the latter that man has no natural inclination to civil society and the fulfillment of obligation, he must find some other selfish natural passion that can somehow be used as the basis for a genuine—as opposed to a spurious, competitive—concern for others. Such a passion is necessary in order to provide the link between the individual and disinterested respect for law or the rights of others, which is what is meant by real morality.

Rousseau finds such a solution in the sexual passion. It necessarily involves other individuals and results in relations very different from those following from fear or love of gain. Moreover, Rousseau discovers that sexual desire, if its development is properly managed, has singular effects on the soul. Books IV–V are a treatise on sex education, notwithstanding the fact that they give a coherent account of God, love, and politics. "Civilization" can become "culture" when it is motivated and organized by sublimated sex.

Sublimation as the source of the higher psychic phenomena, as the explanation of that uniquely human turning away from mere bodily gratification to the pursuit of noble deeds, arts, and thoughts, was introduced by Rousseau. The history of the notion can be traced from him through Kant, Schopenhauer, and Nietzsche (who first introduced the term) and to Freud (who popularized it). Rousseau's attempt to comprehend the richness of man's soul within the context of modern scientific reductionism led him to an interpretation which is still our way of looking at things, although we have lost clarity about its intention and meaning. Rousseau knew that there are sublime things; he had inner experience of them. He also knew that there is no place for the sublime in the modern scientific explanation of man. Therefore, the sublime had to be made out of the nonsublime; this is sublimation. It is a raising of the lower to the higher. Characteristically, those who speak about sublimation since Freud are merely lowering the higher, reducing the sublime things to their elements and losing a hold on the separate dignity of the sublime. We no longer know what is higher about the higher. These last two books of *Emile* undertake in a detailed way the difficult, if not impossible, task of showing how the higher can be derived from the lower without being reduced to it, while at the same time giving us some sense of what Rousseau means by the sublime or noble. It has not been sufficiently emphasized that everything in Books IV–V is related to sex, and that without making that connection the parts cannot be interpreted nor the whole understood.

Rousseau takes it for granted that sex is naturally only a thing of the body. There is no teleology contained in the sexual act other than generation—no concern for the partner, no affection for the children on the part of the male, no

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directedness to the family. Naturally it is not more significant or interesting than eating. In fact, since natural man is primarily concerned with his survival, sex is of secondary importance inasmuch as it contributes nothing to the survival of the individual. But sex, because it is related to another human being, easily mingles with and contributes to nascent *amour-propre*. Being liked and preferred to others becomes important in the sexual act. The conquest, mastery, and possession of another will thus also become central to it, and what was originally bodily becomes almost entirely imaginary. This semifolly leads to the extremes of alienation and exploitation. But precisely because the sexual life of civilized man exists primarily in the imagination, it can be manipulated in a way that the desire for food or sleep cannot be. Sexual desire, if it remains unsatisfied, mixed with imagination and *amour-propre*, produces a tremendous psychic energy that can be used for the greatest deeds and thoughts. Imaginary objects can set new goals, and the desire to be well thought of can turn into love of virtue. But everything depends on purifying and elevating the desire and making it inseparable from its new objects. Thus Rousseau, although Burke could accuse him of pedantic lewdness, would be appalled by contemporary sexual education which separates out the bodily from the spiritual in sex, does not understand the problem involved in treating the bloated passions of social man as though they were natural, is oblivious to the difficulty of attaching the indeterminate drive to useful and noble objects, and fails to appreciate the salutary effect of long ignorance while the vapors brew. Delayed satisfaction is, according to him, the condition of idealism and love, and early satisfaction causes the whole structure to collapse and flatten.

Rousseau's meaning is admirably expressed by Kant, who, following Rousseau, indicated that there is a distinction between what might be called natural puberty and civil puberty.[13] Natural puberty is reached when a male is capable of reproduction. Civil puberty is attained only when a man is able to love a woman faithfully, rear and provide for children, and participate knowledgeably and loyally in the political order which protects the family. But the advent of civilization has not changed the course of nature; natural puberty occurs around fifteen; civil puberty, if it ever comes to pass, can hardly occur before the middle twenties. This means that there is a profound tension between natural desire and civil duty. In fact, this is one of the best examples of the dividedness caused in man by his history. Natural desire almost always lurks untamed amidst the responsibilities of marriage. What Rousseau attempts to do is to make the two puberties coincide, to turn the desire for sexual intercourse into a desire for marriage and a willing submission to the law without suppressing or blaming that original desire. Such a union of desire and duty Kant called true culture.

Rousseau effects this union by establishing successively two passions in Emile which are sublimations of sexual desire and which are, hence, not quite natural but, one might say, according to nature: compassion and love.

COMPASSION

In this first stage the young man is kept ignorant of the meaning of what he is experiencing. He is full of restless energy and becomes sensitive. He needs

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other human beings, but he knows not why. In becoming sensitive to the feelings of others and in needing them, his imagination is aroused and he becomes aware that they are like him. He *feels* for the first time that he is a member of a species. (Until now he was simply indifferent to other human beings, although he *knew* he was a human being.) At this moment the birth of *amour-propre* is inevitable. He compares his situation with those of other men. If the comparison is unfavorable to him, he will be dissatisfied with himself and envious of them; he will wish to take their place. If the comparison is unfavorable to them, he will be content with himself and not competitive with others. Thus *amour-propre* is alienating only if a man sees others whom he can consider happier than himself. It follows that, if one wishes to keep a man from developing the mean passions which excite the desire to harm, he must always see men whom he thinks to be unhappier than he is. If, in addition, he thinks such misfortunes could happen to him, he will feel pity for the sufferer.

This is the ground of Rousseau's entirely new teaching about compassion.[14] Judiciously chosen comparisons presented at the right stage of life will cause Emile to be satisfied with himself and be concerned with others, making him a gentle and beneficent man on the basis of his natural selfishness. Thus compassion would be good for him and good for others. Rousseau introduces a hard-headed softness to moral and political thought.

He asserts that the good fortune of others puts a chill on our hearts, no matter what we say. It separates us from them; we would like to be in their place. But their suffering warms us and gives us a common sense of humanity. The psychic mechanism of compassion is as follows. (1) Once a man's imaginative sensibility is awakened, he winces at the wounds others receive. In an attenuated form he experiences them too, prior to any reflection; he sympathizes; somehow these wounds are inflicted on him. (2) He has a moment of reflection; he realizes that it is the other fellow, not he, who is really suffering. This is a source of satisfaction. (3) He can show his own strength and superiority by assisting the man in distress. (4) He is pleased that he has the spiritual freedom to experience compassion; he senses his own goodness. Active, human compassion (as opposed to the animal compassion described in the *Discourse on the Origins of Inequality*) requires imagination and *amour-propre* in addition to the instinct for self-preservation. Moreover, it cannot withstand the demands of one's own self-preservation. It is a tender plant, but one which will bear sweet fruit if properly cultivated.

Emile's first observations of men are directed to the poor, the sick, the oppressed, and the unfortunate. This is flattering to him, and his first sentiments toward others are gentle. He becomes a kind of social worker. And, as this analysis should make clear, the motive and intention of Rousseauan compassion give it little in common with Christian compassion. Rousseau was perfectly aware that compassion such as he taught is not a virtue and that it can lead to abuse and hypocrisy. But he used this selfish passion to replace or temper other, more dangerous passions. This is part of his correction of Hobbes. Rousseau finds a selfish passion which contains fellow feeling and makes it the ground of sociality to replace those passions which set men at odds. He can even claim he goes farther down the path first broken by Hobbes, who argued that the passions, and not reason, are the only effective motives of human action. Hobbes's

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duties towards others are rational deductions from the passion for self-preservation. Rousseau anchors concern for others in a passion. He makes that concern a pleasure rather than a disagreeable, and hence questionably effective, conclusion.

Rousseau's teaching on compassion fostered a revolution in democratic politics, one with which we live today. Compassion is on the lips of every statesman, and all boast that their primary qualification for office is their compassion. Rousseau singlehandedly invented the category of the disadvantaged. Prior to Rousseau, men believed that their claim on civil society has to be based on an accounting of what they contribute to it. After Rousseau, a claim based not on a positive quality but on a lack became legitimate for the first time. This he introduced as a counterpoise to a society based on Locke's teaching, which has no category for the miserable other than that of the idle and the quarrelsome. The recognition of our sameness and our common vulnerability dampens the harsh competitiveness and egotism of egalitarian political orders. Rousseau takes advantage of the tendency to compassion resulting from equality, and uses it, rather than self-interest, as the glue binding men together. Our equality, then, is based less on our fear of death than on our sufferings; suffering produces a shared sentiment with others, which fear of death does not. For Hobbes, frightened men make an artificial man to protect them; for Rousseau, suffering men seek other men who feel for them.

Of course Emile will not always be able to confine his vision to poor men without station. There are rich and titled men who seem to be much better off than he is. If he were brought to their castles and had a chance to see their privileges and their entertainments, he would likely be dazzled, and the worm of envy would begin to gnaw away at his heart. Jean-Jacques finds a solution to this difficulty by making Emile read history and bringing back what had been banished in Book II.[15] This is the beginning of Emile's education in the arts, as opposed to the sciences. The former can only be studied when his sentiments are sufficiently developed for him to understand the inner movements of the heart and when he experiences a real need to know. Otherwise, learning is idle, undigested, excess baggage at best. Emile's curiosity to find out about all of Plutarch's heroes and set his own life over against their lives fuels his study. Rousseau expects that this study will reveal the vanity of the heroes' aspirations and cause revulsion at their tragic failures. Emile's solid, natural pleasures, his cheaply purchased Stoicism and self-sufficiency, his lack of the passion to rule, will cause him to despise their love of glory and pity their tragic ends. The second level of the education in compassion produces contempt for the great of this world, not a slave's contempt founded in envy, indignation, and resentment, but the contempt stemming from a conviction of superiority which admits of honest fellow feeling and is the precondition of compassion. This disposition provides a standpoint from which to judge the social and political distinctions among men, just as Robinson Crusoe's island provided one for judging the distinctions based on the division of labor. The joining of these two standards enables Emile to judge the life of tyrants as Socrates enabled Glaucon and Adeimatus to judge it by comparing it to the life of philosophers. Emile can use his own life as the basis for judgment, for his own soul contains no germ of the tyrannical temptation. The old way of using heroes in education was to

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make the pupil dissatisfied with himself and rivalrous with the model. Rousseau uses them to make his pupil satisfied with himself and compassionate toward the heroes. The old way alienated the child and made him prey to authorities whose titles he could not judge. Self-satisfaction of egalitarian man is what Rousseau promotes. But he is careful to insure that this satisfaction is only with a good or natural self.

Reading is again the means of accomplishing the third and final part of the education in compassion.[16] This time the texts are fables which contain a moral teaching. They, too, had been banished in Book II, because a child would always identify himself with, e.g., the fox who cheats the crow rather than with the crow who loses the cheese, for a child understands nothing about vanity and a great deal about cheese. At this later stage Rousseau has arranged for Emile to have been deceived by confidence men who play upon his vanity, so that when he reads the fable he will immediately identify with the crow and attain self-consciousness. Satire becomes the mirror in which he sees himself. All this is intended to remind him that he, too, is human and could easily fall victim to the errors made by others. It is as though Rousseau had used Aristotle's discourse on the passions as a text and followed Aristotle's warning that those who do not imagine that the misfortunes befalling others can befall them are insolent rather than compassionate.[17] The first stage of Emile's introduction to the human condition shows him that most men are sufferers; the second, that the great, too, are sufferers and hence equal to the small, and the third, that he is potentially a sufferer, saved only by his education. Equality, which was a rational deduction in Hobbes, thus becomes self-evident to the sentiments. Emile's first principle of action was pleasure and pain; his second, after the birth of reason and his learning the sciences, was utility; now compassion is added to the other two, and concern for others becomes part of his sense of his own interest. Rousseau studies the passions and finds a way of balancing them one against the other rather than trying to develop the virtues which govern them. He does for the soul what Montesquieu did for the government in inventing the separation and balance of powers.

But for all its important consequences, compassion is, within the context of Emile's education, only a step on the way to his fulfillment as husband and father. Its primary function is to make Emile social while remaining whole.

LOVE

Finally Rousseau must tell Emile the meaning of his longings. He reveals sex to the young Emile as the Savoyard Vicar revealed God to the young Rousseau.[18] Although it is impossible to discuss the *Profession of Faith of the Savoyard Vicar* here, it is essential to the understanding of Rousseau's intention to underline the profound differences between the two revelations. The Vicar's teaching is presented to the corrupt young Rousseau and never to Emile. Moreover, the Vicar teaches the dualism of body and soul, which is alien and contradictory to the unity which Emile incarnates. In keeping with this, the Vicar is otherworldly and guilt-ridden about his sexual desires, which he deprecates, whereas Emile is very much of this world and exalts his sexual desires, which are blessed by God and lead to blessing God. Emile's rewards are on earth, the

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Vicar's in Heaven. The Vicar is the best of the traditional, and he is only an oasis in the desert which Rousseau crossed before reaching his new Sinai.

Thus at the dawn of a new day, Emile learns that the peak of sexual longing is the love of God mediated by the love of a woman.[19] Sublimation finally operates a transition from the physical to the metaphysical. But before speaking to Emile, Rousseau explains to his readers how difficult it is to be a good rhetorician in modern times. Speech has lost its power because it cannot refer to a world with deep human significance. In Greek and Biblical antiquity the world was full of meaning put there by the great and terrible deeds of gods and heroes. Men were awe-struck by the ceremonies performed to solemnize public and private occasions. The whole earth spoke out to make oaths sacred. But now the world has been deprived of its meaning by Enlightenment. The land is no longer peopled by spirits, and nothing supports human aspiration anymore. Thus men can only affect one another by the use of force or profit. The language of human relations has lost its foundations. This is, as we would say, a demythologized world. And these remarks show what Rousseau is about. He wants to use imagination to read meaning back into nature. The old meanings were also the results of imaginings the reality of which men believed. They were monuments of fear and anger given cosmic significance. But they did produce a human world, however cruel and unreasonable. Rousseau suggests a new poetic imagination motivated by love rather than the harsher passions, and here one sees with clarity Rousseau's link with romanticism.

With this preface, Rousseau proceeds to inform Emile what the greatest pleasure in life is. He explains to him that what he desires is sexual intercourse with a woman, but he makes him believe that his object contains ideas of virtue and beauty without which she would not be attractive, nay, without which she would be repulsive. His bodily satisfaction depends upon his beloved's spiritual qualities; therefore Emile longs for the beautiful. Rousseau by his descriptive power incorporates an ideal into Emile's bodily lust. This is how sex becomes love, and the two must be made to appear inseparable. This is the reason for the delay in sexual awareness. Emile must learn much before he can comprehend such notions, and his sexual energy must be raised to a high pitch. Early indulgence would separate the intensity of lust from the objects of admiration. Rousseau admits that love depends upon illusions, but the deeds which those illusions produce are real. This is the source of nobility of mind and deed, and apart from fanaticism, nothing else can produce such dedication.

Rousseau develops all this with precision and in the greatest detail. Only Plato has meditated on love with comparable profundity.[20] And it is Plato who inspired Rousseau's attempt to create love. The modern philosophers with whom Rousseau began have notably unerotic teachings. Their calculating, fear-motivated men are individuals, not directed towards others, but towards couplings and the self-forgetting implied in them. Such men have flat souls. They see nature as it is; and, since they are unerotic, they are unpoetic. Rousseau, a philosopher-poet like Plato, tried to recapture the poetry in the world. He knew that Plato's *Symposium* taught that *eros* is the longing for eternity, ultimately the longing for oneness with the unchanging, intelligible *ideas*. Now, Rousseau held that nature is the nature of modern science—matter in motion—that there are no *ideas;* there is no *eros*, only sex. But such a soul, which has no beautiful

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objects to contemplate and contains no divine madness, Rousseau regarded as ignoble. He set about reconstructing Plato's soul, turning sex into *eros*, by the creation of ideals to take the place of the *ideas*. The philosopher is even more poetic for Rousseau than for Plato, for the very objects of contemplation and longing are the products of poetry rather than nature. The world of concern to man is made by the poet who has understood nature and its limits. So, imagination, once banished, returns to ascend the royal throne.

Although this great theme can only be touched on, the practical effects of making Emile a lover can easily be seen. In the first place, when he loves, he will not be loving an other, will not be making himself and his happiness hostage to an alien will and thus engaging in a struggle for mastery. His woman will, to use Platonic language, participate in the *idea* he has of her. He will recognize his own highest aspirations in her. She will complete him without alienating him. Secondly, his inclination for one woman, and her natural attachment to her children, will in turn attach him to the children as an extension of his inclinations, thus constituting the family seminaturally, without the need for civil or religious commandment. The basic unit of civil society will then not be the individual, but the family. This tempers the selfishness of liberal democracy based on individual rights, giving individuals concern for something beyond their immediate interest. Here concern with preservation of individuals moves toward concern with preservation of the species. And finally, because attachment to the family implies some attachment to civil society, Emile's natural selfishness has been stretched to the point where it is close to generality. All this education acts as a bridge between the particular will and the general will.

So, in the end, Rousseau has accomplished his mission by making a man who is natural, civilized, whole, compassionate, a lover, and who, finally, submits to a law he has given himself.[21]

Conclusion

Emile seems ridiculous because it proposes a system of education which is manifestly impossible for most men and quasi-impossible for any man. But this is to misunderstand it. It is not an education manual, anymore than Plato's *Republic* is advice to rulers. Each adopts a convention—the founding of a city or the rearing of a boy—in order to survey the entire human condition. They are books for philosophers[22] and are meant to influence practice only in the sense that those who read them well cannot help but change their general perspectives.

Rousseau intends to show that only his understanding of nature and history can adequately describe what man really is, while cautioning his contemporaries against simplifying and impoverishing the human phenomena. The very unity of man he appears to believe he has demonstrated reveals the problematic character of any solution to man's dividedness. Emile stands somewhere between the citizen of the *Social Contract* and the solitary of the *Reveries*, lacking something of each. And this book was the inspiration for both Kant's idealism and Schiller's romanticism, which are each somehow simplifications of one side of Rousseau's complex teaching. Whatever else Rousseau may have accomplished, he presented the alternatives available to man most comprehensively

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and profoundly and articulated them in the form which has dominated discussion since his time. We must study him to know ourselves and to discover possibilities his great rhetoric may have overwhelmed.

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[2]*Emile*, vol. 4, p. 777.

[3]"Conjectural Beginning of Human History," in *On History*, ed. Lewis Beck (Indianapolis, Ind.: Bobbs-Merrill, 1963), pp. 60–61.

[4]*Emile*, p. 250.

[5]Ibid., p. 454.

[6]Ibid., p. 270.

[7]Ibid., pp. 287–290, 312.

[8]Ibid., p. 501.

[9]Plato, *Republic*, 391 a-b.; *Emile*, pp. 314–315, 492–493.

[10]*Emile*, pp. 362–363.

[11]Ibid., pp. 329–333.

[12]Ibid., p. 340; cf. Plato, *Republic* 335 a–e.

[13]"Conjectural Beginning of Human History," p. 61, note.

[14]*Emile*, pp. 503 ff.

[15]Ibid., pp. 525–536; cf. pp. 348–350.

[16]Ibid., pp. 537–542; cf. pp. 351–357, and Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, vol. 2, part 3, chap. 1.

[17]Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, book 2, chaps. 8 and 2.

[18]*Emile*, pp. 558–635; 639–663.

[19]Ibid., pp. 791–792.

[20]*La Nouvelle Héloïse*, vol. 2, p. 223.

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[22]*Lettres Ecrites de la Montagne*, vol. 3, p. 783.

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WILLIAM KESSEN

Rousseau's Children

ROUSSEAU HAD FOUR SETS OF CHILDREN; they are an odd lot, in many ways, and some of the disputation about the meaning of our friend and his works may be put in place if we look carefully at his parental quadruplicity.

Thérèse LeVasseur's Foundlings

Late in 1746 or 1747, Rousseau returned to Paris from a successful season of music and chemistry at Chenonceaux to find that his steady friend, Mlle. LeVasseur, had grown as newly plump as he "though in another way." His free-wheeling companions at Mme. La Selle's table provided him with word of a common practice that would "extricate" him from his embarrassment. The story of Rousseau's babies has been told often, but it deserves yet another look if we are to understand the peculiar impact of Rousseau on children over the last two centuries. The mechanics of disposal were easy enough: find a reliable midwife to manage the delivery and then let her take the newborn to Vincent de Paul's Foundling Home where the child could join the three thousand or so other abandoned infants of that year. There were one or two trickier problems to be solved, to be sure. Thérèse did not like the idea—"I had the greatest difficulty in the world in persuading her to accept this sole means of saving her honor." She did not like the idea any better when the episode was repeated with her second child the next year, and we may guess that she was scarcely more happy on occasions three, four, and five.[1]

But, for Rousseau, the gravest difficulty with the depositing of the foundlings lay in the future. His first child would have been an adolescent, when, on June 12, 1761, Rousseau, exposed by Voltaire's charges of hypocrisy, retrospectively discovered his scruples. In a letter to Mme. la Maréchale de Luxembourg, he wrote:

> Five children were born of [our] liaison, and all were placed in the Foundling's Hospital, and with so little thought of the possibility of their identification that I did not even keep a record of their dates of birth [or of their gender]. For several years now, the self-reproach which my neglectful behavior has aroused in me has disturbed my peace of mind and I am about to die [a frequent condition in Rousseau's life] without being able to remedy it, much to the mother's and my own regret . . .

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> The ideas with which my mind was filled as a result of my error were to a large extent responsible for my writing [the *Emile*].[2]

But Rousseau conceived the *Emile* together with the *Discourses* on the road to Vincennes in 1749; the children of his flesh (or, at least, of Thérèse's) probably continued until he left her bed in the midfifties. Rather, the abandonments measured Rousseau's keen recognition that he could not manage the daily pull of filial need and filial love any better than he could manage a full-blooded sexual exchange. Living children—dirty pants, smallpox, requiring devotion, and all—do not permit the ecstatic (and chaste) kiss of Sophie d'Houdetot that can then be served up to posterity in passionate literary periods. Rousseau could stay near Thérèse, whose demands were familiar and meetable, and he could love his dogs—Turc (formerly, Duc) at the Hermitage ("my friend and constant companion") and Sultan across Europe (Hume had to haul him from Sultan's cries to a performance by Garrick before the King and Queen of England).[3] But he knew somehow that children would overtax his limited capacity for reciprocal affection.

The Promenades of the *Rêveries,* written a few months before his death, return to the theme of Thérèse's foundlings in a form that reveals Rousseau's paternal dubiety best. It is no accident that his soliloquy, like his confessions to Mme. de Luxembourg, was provoked by a recent public reference to his "error": "In the middle of dinner, [the elder daughter of the woman Vauccasin], who was married and pregnant, took it into her head to ask me abruptly, while staring at me, if I had had any children. I answered, while blushing up to my eyes, that I had not had that good fortune. She smiled maliciously while looking around at the group . . ." Rousseau was still incensed, in his Ninth Promenade, by the implication that his error meant that he hated children "because I knew that there never was a man who loved more to watch little children joking and playing together than I, and often I stopped in the street and on walks to watch their cuteness and their little games with an interest I never saw shared by anyone." He had been forced to send his children to the foundling home by his own indifference and incapacity, by the certainty of Thérèse's spoiling ways, by the monstrousness of her mother, and, in a wild paranoid flight, by the premonition that, had he kept the children, he would have been trapped by his enemies into an incestuous muddle. No, he loved children so much that pleasure in watching them was sometimes an obstacle to his studying them and, in his customary defense with words against facts, "it would certainly be the most amazing thing in the world for *Héloïse* and *Emile* to be the work of a man who did not like children."[4] As we shall see, I have no difficulty with such an amazing conclusion.

There is a franker meeting with himself along the ninth walk when Rousseau thinks about how ugly he has become: "Children do not like old age; the aspect of nature giving way is hideous in their eyes . . ." But worse is his discomfiture in talking to children: "I should be more at my ease before a monarch of Asia than before a child whom I must make babble." Perhaps it is as well for the foundlings that Rousseau did not try to find "in [infant] eyes the joy and contentment of being with me," perhaps as well that he was "obliged to seek among animals the look of benevolence" he might have expected from his children.[5]

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The Child of the Books

Rousseau's career as pedagogue probably began in 1735 when he "undertook the charge of a child for a few weeks," an obstreperous youngster, apparently, who was brought out of a temper tantrum when the author of the *Emile* locked him alone all night in a dark room. About this time, in a letter to his father, young Rousseau announced his first two principles of education—"le premier comprend tout ce qui sert à éclairer l'esprit et à l'orner de connoissance utiles et agreables, et l'autre renferme les moiens de former le coeur à la sagesse et à la vertu." Like the *Mémoire présenté à Mr de M[ably]* and the *Projet pour l'éducation de M. de Sainte-Marie*, Rousseau's juvenile principles reflect almost perfectly the overpowering influence of Locke and the current forms of French educational theory; they are a pale potion, conventional enough medicine, from the man who, in but twenty years, would be driven from home if not from fame with the Parlement de Paris' denunciation; after the *Emile*, Rousseau stood condemned as one of those who "abondonnent la foi, en suivant des esprits d'erreurs & des doctrines diaboliques." What were Rousseau's devilish doctrines?[6] Shortly after 1740, Rousseau left his short life as a practicing teacher to become Preceptor to his contemporaries and to us all; in the ineluctable progression from the *Second Discourse* to *Julie* to *Emile* to (near the end) the *Government of Poland*, he weaves several ideological and psychological principles among one another and among the vivid strands of his personal life to form a unique portrait of the child in society. The principles are not the heresies of the Savoyard vicar that aroused the Parlement; they are, taken together, a remarkable new child psychology. Coherence and ineluctability have not always been assigned to Rousseau; Huizinga, not alone, quotes Benjamin Constant approvingly: "He thrashes about among a thousand contrary ideas as in a dark night lit up by frequent flashes of lightning." I disagree. Jean-Jacques maddens the modern rationalistic temperament with his insouciance about logic, but Cassirer, Crocker, and Claparède, chief among others, have cleaned away enough of the disguise and disfigurement of Rousseau's vain verbosity to reveal the child of his books.[7]

Rousseau makes two fundamental assignments to the mind of the child. They are the roots from which his pedagogy, politics, and morality spring: *the child is driven by consuming impulse*, and *the child is almost infinitely adaptable*. For Rousseau, the joint operation of the two principles forces the central pedagogical (and political) dilemma. How can human impulse, imperious and eternal, be brought into a moral social form? One conclusion follows immediately, and it is unambiguously accepted throughout Rousseau: the child cannot solve the problem alone! Unmoderated working out of impulse would lead—had led—to the sickly evil society Rousseau ambivalently despised and ambivalently fled. His disquisitions on his own masturbation and his safeguards against Emile's falling into the same destructive practice are a mark and symbol of insatiable lust and, "the more violent the passions, the more necessary laws are to contain them." "Men, once they have left a fleeting age of innocence, are evil." "It is our passions that make us weak . . ." "[Man] should work to repress [curiosity] along with all his other natural inclinations." "How many errors we should spare reason, how many vices we should stifle before their birth, if we were able to force the animal economy to favor the moral order it so often

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upsets!" Even poor Julie, fallen from virtue but redeemed by a good man and her own devotion, must die tragically and, more to the present point, she must die still loving her seducer. One of Rousseau's most significant psychological discoveries was that the Wild Man of legend and folktale is not outside; he is within us, and he cannot, *by his nature*, be extirpated. It is exactly in the *Second Discourse*, where later writers have (incredibly) found a Noble Savage, that Rousseau sketched most succinctly the *inevitable* decline of human culture into "vanity and scorn . . . shame and envy" "as soon as a man needed another's help." At least since Lovejoy's paper on the "supposed primitivism" of the *Second Discourse* in 1923, the Rousseau of Return to Nature! has been exposed as a scandalous misreading. As Crocker notes, "It was always the evil in men that worried Rousseau"; he was obsessed with destructive passions.[8]

Hope for the beast's salvation lay, paradox on paradox, in the second revolutionary principle of child mind—the principle of adaptability which had turned man from morally neutral and mindless animal to social pestilence in the first place! In the *Second Discourse*, we find the *faculté de se perfectionner*, the "perfectibility" that set primitive man off from the other animals and which, in turn, destroyed his simplicity. The postulation of perfectibility is staggering in its psychological implications and it was not until our own time that the implications have begun to be studied in the lives of children. Perhaps better called "adaptability" (after all, perfectibility had led to a monstrous society), the principle and its representation in other parts of Rousseau's work inform a radical vision of the child. The behavior of the child at any time is not incomplete or "preadult"; his thought and his action are appropriate for the stage of his development. At any moment, the child is a construction of impulse and the demands of his environment for his adaptation. "Climates, seasons, sounds, colors, darkness, light, the elements, food, noise, silence, movement, rest, everything acts on our machine and consequently on our soul . . .," but not in simple Humean association. Each stage of the child's development is a rebuilding of himself to effect a compromise between his passion and the requirements of his world. Familiar now in the forms that Piaget has given us, the principle of perfectibility was a genuine novelty for the eighteenth century, and it remains an idea of moment because Rousseau did not attempt, as Piaget has, to remove the burden on the child's adaptation of his continuing passion.[9]

Each of Rousseau's pedagogical writings represents an attempt to escape the apparent inevitable descent into corruption and evil when impulse and adaptability work in society; each proposal, save only the untested last, failed in part. The citizens of the *Second Discourse* become property-mad and vain, Julie dies with her passion for Saint-Preux unslaked (we shall return to her success as a mother), Emile's specially prepared mate is an adulteress. It is no wonder that, in the *Government of Poland*, Rousseau confronts the failure of the weaker restraints he had proposed on human passion and proposes a totalitarian regime (of a very special kind, to be sure) with education as its foundation.

> The newly-born infant, upon first opening his eyes, must gaze upon the fatherland, and until his dying day should behold nothing else . . . Choke off vices before they are born, and you will have done on behalf of virtue all that needs doing . . .

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> Do not let the students in your school go off by themselves to play, just for the fun of it. They should play together in public, and for some prize to which they all aspire and which arouses in them the spirit of competition and emulation.[10]

Children, raised by the State, will learn "never to want anything except what society wants." In the earlier words of the *Social Contract*, "For the impulse of mere appetite is slavery, and the obedience to the law which we have prescribed to ourselves is liberty." For Rousseau, at sixty, freedom came to mean "the submission to a strict and inviolable law which the individual erects over himself."

In short, the *Discourses* tell of the evolution of corrupting society, the *Emile* explores the possibility of isolated tutorial control of the child's adaptation, *Julie* makes the boundaries wider but confines the children to a loving, manipulating family, the *Social Contract* and the *Poland* announce that only the control of the All, only obedience to the *volonté générale* can prevent the child (and the society) from falling again into disarray and sin. Nature's instinctive *amour-de-soi* will not, in adapting to ordinary society's demands, become foul *amour-propre;* rather, the demands of the State force the perfectible child to take on "liberating" *amour-du-moi-commun*.

But Rousseau, in each of these books and in different ways, adds a third and social principle to the ascriptions he has made to the mind of the child. As ever, the child needs help. All procedures for the rearing of children and for the proper design of culture require an unseen hand, the wisdom of the Tutor, the Father, the Lawgiver. Perfectibility cannot, as evolutionists from Diderot to Galton hoped, guarantee progress and perfection. The guiding direction of the Master, all-knowing and largely invisible, is necessary to the moral child, the moral society. Lycurgus is a presence for Rousseau from the *Discourses* to the *Poland* and when Julie says that her children behave under the "yoke of necessity" one recalls that the Spartan leader imposed on his people "an iron yoke . . . but he attached them to this yoke."[11]

The workers of the benign yoke of necessity in Rousseau—variants of the Master—appear in four forms and with varying representation. The first, the mysterious General Will, does not speak much of children. Lycurgus and Moses aside, it is Rousseau himself who plays the second Lawgiver—the layer-on of gentle chains. In the *Corsica* and the *Poland* he acts on his earlier political injunctions and, surprisingly for the hymnist of diversity and individuality, the *Rechtsstadt* that emerges is tough, uniform, and authoritarian. The two more pedagogical variants on the Master are, unlike the General Will and the writer of constitutions, central to our understanding of Rousseau's psychology of the child.

Julie's husband, Wolmar, is *Paterfamilias*, the cool certain protector of the hearth; his benevolent reign brings the peace and security that permit the children to grow and the tutors to teach. He is a stuffed shirt. More, he was for Rousseau the idealization of rationality, the man free of passion, perhaps the General Father. "He is the same toward everyone, he neither seeks out nor shuns anyone, and he never has other than rational preferences. [Julie was his first "attachment" and his affection for her] is so well guided by decorum and . . . equilibrium that he had no need to change his behavior in changing his

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condition . . ." Neither gay nor sad, he has no passion save his love for his wife, and even that emotion "is so even and so temperate that one would say that he loves only as much as he wishes to and that he wishes to only as much as reason permits." One side of Jean-Jacques, the side that Kant saw in discerning clarity, is revealed in Wolmar. If only we could, in Montmorency, in Clarens, in Ajaccio, or in Warsaw, construct from the biological material our children present to us such judicious impartial observers of human weakness and error.[12]

The fourth Master—the Tutor proper—is the most familiar to us. Emile's guide and Julie are Rousseau's nominations for the post and, different as they are, they expose some of his most cherished and consistent premises. They share a distaste for intellectualism (although Julie does not approach the Tutor's "I hate books" and his disquisitions on "literary lumber"), they have a profound aversion to traditional pedagogy with its drill and language learning and explicit domination by the teacher, and their methods are devious. The best model for the ever-present deviousness is Julie's garden. It has the look of naturalness and informality, but it is the result of careful planning of carelessness, the systematic reconstruction of nature. No visitor should perceive the hand of the gardener; all the work of control and management (for example, saving the birds from their enemies, "surtout les enfants") should be hidden. So too with the work of education; the child should be brought to his tasks and to his maturity as though nature had formed him. "In everything that displeases him, he feels the weight [*l'empire*] of necessity, the effect of his own weakness, never the working of someone else's bad will . . ."[13] Emile's tutor conspires with the gardener to tear up the young man's garden so that he can learn about property rights; Julie excites her son by reading part of a story, then pretends to be called away so that he will be moved to read by himself. The parents have unexceptionable authority over even the remotest corners of their children's lives; the child has none. He must not join adult conversation; he must have no sense of command or superiority, and "perceiving that he has no authority over the people about him he becomes tractable and obliging; in seeking to gain the esteem of others, he contracts an affection for them in turn . . ." Here, we get a glimpse of Rousseau the behavioral engineer. He applies Locke's "esteem and disgrace" with a persistence and rigor that lead Crocker to see Jean-Jacques as the forerunner of the twentieth-century behaviorists. And so he is, even to the use of what is nowadays called "time out" from reward as a technique of control; in Julie's words, "I make this a punishment by contriving to render every other place [but where she wants the children to be] disagreeable to them." The passages on education in *Julie* are parallel to Rousseau's discussion of political power in the last books: "The order which defines [Wolmar's] house is the reflection of the order of his soul; it seems to mimic in a tiny setting the order of the world's governance . . . One recognizes the hand of the master always and one never feels it . . ."[14] It is the meeting of Julie's passion (even when it serves her husband's pedagogical plan) with Wolmar's chill reasonableness that makes some relevant pages of *Julie* an arousing and sometimes hateful treatise on education. Rousseau as child psychologist and pedagogue maintained the selfsame tension between *penser* and *sentir* that Cassirer has conjoined in presenting a larger vision of Jean-Jacques: "Newton was the first to see order and regularity combined with great simplicity, where disorder and ill-matched variety had reigned be-

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fore . . . Rousseau was the first to discover in the variety of shapes that men assume the deeply concealed nature of man and to observe the hidden law that justifies Providence." But "[Rousseau's new contribution] to his time seems to have been his act of freeing it from the domination of intellectualism. To the forces of rationalist understanding . . . he opposed the force of feeling."[15]

Rousseau's Heirs

Huizinga is rude and unjust when he asks about the Citizen of Geneva, "Why . . . try . . . to make sense of a writer who so clearly shares Humpty Dumpty's determination that words shall mean what one wants them to mean?"[16] but the image is apt for the educators and psychologists who have used Rousseau as a screen on which to project their own interpretations of children and schools. In a sober sense, the history of Rousseau's influence on English and American culture has been a history of neglect and misreadings, a series of shallow commentaries on "Man was born free . . ." and "God makes all things good . . ." Rousseau, of course, carries some responsibility for his survival as a one-liner; his sensual delight in aphorism and his longwindedness invite the search for nuggets. As a contemporary English reviewer of *Emile* wrote, "He never knows where to stop . . . Poverty can hardly be more vicious than such an abundance."[17] But misinterpretation of Rousseau and diminution of interest in his writings among professional students of children cannot be understood merely as an incompatibility of style. The mystery continues.

During his lifetime, and to the end of the century, Rousseau was hardly ignored; *Julie* and *Emile* were published over and over (*Julie* in seventy-two known editions before 1800, *Emile* in scarcely fewer), and were translated, pirated, quoted, imitated, praised, and attacked in sufficiency to suggest that every literate European had read the books. In England's record-keeping *Annual Register* alone, a dozen or more references to Rousseau appeared between 1759 and 1783; the notes ranged from Voltaire's hilarious summary of *Julie* to a review of *Lettre à d'Alembert* which was longer than the review of Johnson's *Rasselas* preceding it or of Adam Smith's *Moral Sentiments* which followed it. The *Register's* review of the English *Emile* also set down, within a few months of the book's publication in French, one of the main lines of critique through the years—the essential eccentricity of Rousseau's ideas about education. Amid brief notes of praise, parts of the work were seen as impracticable, chimerical, highly blameable, and "dangerous both to piety and morals." But attention Rousseau certainly received, from Kant's legendary disruption of his Königsberg schedule to the Parlement's "sera lacéré et brûlé."[18]

The *Emile* also quickly entered into the history of practical education. Although the Edgeworths, for example, argued against Rousseau's "debasing cunning" as a tutor, they marked the breadth of his influence in 1798 by remarking about the *Emile* and Locke's *Thoughts*, "We shall not produce long quotations from books which are in every body's hands." Or, from even earlier lectures on education, "Rousseau is in full possession of public attention . . ."[19] The peak was not to become a plateau, however, and Rousseau's most often cited heir in pedagogy, Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi, diverted the intellectual inheritance in so destructive a way that the masochist in Jean-Jacques would have been titil-

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lated. Because the ritual genealogical litany of educational psychology invariably goes Locke–Rousseau–Pestalozzi–Froebel, we should examine briefly the distortion contained in the recital. A biographer of Pestalozzi catches both the early onset of misreading and the beginning of Rousseau's neglect. "Into [the Physiocrats'] movement there struck like lightning Rousseau's *Emile* . . . with its attack on society and its call 'Back to Nature!' " It is true that Pestalozzi named his first son, born in 1770, Jean-Jacques and that he managed (despite the attempts of Frau Pestalozzi at subversion) to keep the boy from reading until he was twelve years old, but he did not long hanker after continuing Rousseau's pedagogy. By 1792, he had freed himself from the *Emile*, an "impractical dream-book," and with the reading of his paper on elementary education in 1809, he publicly and explicitly broke off his branch of the family tree. We can understand the distortion of Rousseau a bit better when we recognize that there was to be no Hume to his Locke.[20]

The German line of pedagogical theory, determined in part by the Froebel of the litany, was not much influenced either directly by the *Emile* or indirectly by Kant's remarkable perception of Rousseau as the Newton of morals. A later holder of the Königsberg chair in philosophy and the nineteenth century's most influential educational theorist, Johann Friedrich Herbart, somehow managed in 1806 to misread both Locke and Rousseau in a single patriotic slap: "What most distinctly raises [a pedagogue, Niemeyer] above foreigners, and entitles us to think with pride of our nationality, is . . . the definite moral tendency of his principles, whereas in the principles of Locke and Rousseau crude impulse holds entire sway, and, barely mitigated by a highly unstable moral feeling, leads to a superficial sensuous life."[21]

Ronda has recently taught us, in persuasive detail, about one of the blocks that lay in the way of Rousseau's significant entrance into American pedagogy and developmental psychology. Through the middle half of the nineteenth century, the traditional strenuous procedures of the American classroom, based on Calvinism in manner and tone, came under their first credible attack. The vague alliance of Transcendentalists, in their uneven march toward Unitarianism, Abolition, and Nature, contained several educators and pedagogical theorists who might have listened with some interest to Rousseau's complicated arguments about impulse and society. The eccentric Bronson Alcott, the solitary Thoreau, even the intellectual anti-intellectual Emerson were, for wildly different reasons, ripe for *Julie* and *Emile*. The union never took place; only Hawthorne appears to have read Rousseau closely, and only Hawthorne maintained his vision of the ambiguous child while his Concord friends were moving toward the child as redeemer and saint. For them, the proclaimer of the new child was not Rousseau, but Wordsworth; the document of liberation was not *Emile*, but *Intimations of Immortality*. The poem commanded the imagination and the mind of reformers from Alcott to the far more rigorous Elizabeth Peabody, who, in a rare aside, wrote of Rousseau's "vicious . . . pampering [of] human idiosyncrasy." The puzzle of Rousseau's being leapfrogged in the discernible progression of Locke to Wordsworth to American thought has not been solved, but the facts seem clear enough. Reform in formal pedagogy came to the United States through Pestalozzi, Froebel, and (later) Montessori; the reworking of American ideas about the nature of the child came through the Romantic poets.[22]

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Having missed the Transcendental bus, Rousseau was left behind. When the academic reaction in pedagogy began to regather its forces (the traditional group had, in any case, lost only in the essays and not in the classrooms), there was no room for either Wordsworth or Rousseau. By 1886, it was possible to write of both England and the United States, "the *Emile* has long ceased to be read in this country, and the only English translation . . . was published in the last century [1763, in fact] and has not been reprinted."[23]

The story has one more chapter, however—the rise of progressive education and of systematic child study. Progressive education, with a notable exception, called on Rousseau as a patron saint, not as a text, and some of the invocations were peculiar. He was said to have "sounded the bugle call to [the] attack . . . upon the school's imposition, on all children, of a rigid system of learning . . ." And he was held to have changed the emphasis from schooling in "formal religious doctrine, preparatory for life hereafter, to the study of the life and institutions amid which man lives here." And, of course, he was celebrated for his "doctrine of Return to Nature." For the opposition, with equal misunderstanding, he was lambasted for his part in the degradation of school discipline. "But these rebellions against academic ways and in favor of 'the child' . . . ran to ridiculous extremes . . . When 'the child' becomes the starting point, the center, and the end of all education, the whole movement tends eventually to sterility."[24] Where, in a list like this, can we find the author of the *Poland?*

The exception to the usual casual readers of Rousseau was John Dewey, who, on several occasions, demonstrated his secure control not only of the *Emile* but of the *Discourses* and the *Poland* as well. Dewey gravely separated himself from Rousseau's poor mouthing of society in education, but he cannot be charged with misunderstanding him. Only rarely and recently has Dewey's perspicacity been mimicked.[25]

As Ariès has noted, "the association of childhood with primitivism and irrationalism or prelogicism characterizes our contemporary concept of childhood" and Rousseau is unique in foreshadowing the association. More reason, then, to be surprised that he figured so little in the invention of developmental psychology. The polymorph, G. Stanley Hall, like John Fiske, knew that the Genevan was important to his reinvention of adolescence, but Hall wrote with now-familiar irrelevance: "We may dream of intuitive natures, like Schiller's 'esthetic souls,' so ideally endowed and environed that they have acquired nothing they later need to abandon; but such a being is as much a psychological impossibility as the ideal savage of Rousseau and St. Pierre."[26] And Freud? Rousseau looks to me like a treasure trove of psychoanalytic ore, a *demonstrandum ad oculos* of very nearly perfect phallicity. But, no, the architect of the unconscious refers to Rousseau only four times in his entire corpus and none of the references is beguiling. Academic psychology has had even less to tell us about the impact of our hero; the standard works in the history of psychology are nearly silent and, in the dozen hundred pages of the prestigious *Manual of Child Psychology* there is one citation of Rousseau, the comment of a secondary source on his observations of newborn behavior. As we commemorate an anniversary, we find nobody in American psychology and few in American education who are ready to attend the party. Locke fully captured the disciplinary psychologists, as Pestalozzi captured the educators and Wordsworth the transcendental reformers. Moreover, the political cry of the nineteenth-century conservatives that

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"Rousseau was dethroned with the fall of his extravagant child the Republic" faced a curious antistrophe in the claim of the twentieth-century democrats: "From Plato to Rousseau, the only honest answer [to the question, 'Who shall establish and enforce educational standards?'] is the idea of an educational dictatorship, exercised by those who are supposed to have acquired knowledge of the real Good. The answer has since become obsolete; knowledge of the available means for creating a humane existence for all is no longer confined to a privileged elite."[27]

Rousseau's ideas about children and education have been no easier for the twentieth century to assimilate than they were for the eighteenth and nineteenth. He has slipped out of our intellectual grasp again and again, or, rather, we have not had the strength to hold him fast. Generations of commentators on the nature of children have pulled Rousseau off the shelf to hail him as saint or to excoriate him as villain; the misreadings on both sides testify to the intricacy and ambiguity of his vision. Perhaps we should listen again to that first English reviewer: "The fault most generally observed in discourses upon education, is a tendency to common place. Nothing, in fact can be more trite, than the greatest part of the observations, which have been detailed upon that subject from Quintilian to monsieur Rollin. This is however the fault, into which the ingenious author of Emilius is, of all others, in the least danger of falling. To know what the received notions are upon any subject, is to know what those of Rousseau are not."

Rousseau's Longest Living Child—Jean-Jacques

For a child psychologist, the temptation to expatiate on Rousseau's most durable offspring—himself—is well nigh irresistible. His raging ambivalence, his raw narcissism, his repetition of the family romance in which he joins an untouchable (or untouched) woman and her virile partner (never her husband), his ability to write flamingly paranoid letters in a precise and orderly hand (the last letter to Hume is exquisite), the priority of shame in his life, his bladder and his spleen—all call for the fancies and the facts of the psychologist. Rousseau has surely received, at least, the fancies. No mystery remains more worthy of study, however, than the discrepancy between the wild rage of his personal polemic and the words his contemporaries used to describe him: gay in company, *aimable*, polite, gentle, modest, well-bred, gentle-spirited, warm-hearted, cheerful. When Voltaire wrote that Rousseau might have been Paul if he hadn't better liked being Judas, we can guess who Voltaire was casting as Jesus. Yet, in his attempt to be seen as perfect, even as perfectly vile, Rousseau was his own Judas and his own Paul. And "who is the greater danger . . . the Judases or the Pauls? In both instances, aggression engages in an unholy alliance with ambivalence." Happily for the present-day student of children, Rousseau's aggression did not destroy him, and his ambivalence did not destroy his artistry. In natural genesis, his profound explorations into the place of the child in society and of society in the child grow out of his attempt to comprehend that perverse genius *Rousseau fils de Jean-Jacques*.[28]

References

[1]Rousseau tells the story in *Confessions* (1765/1781), trans. J. M. Cohen (London, 1953), pp. 320–322. Buffon's *Natural History* tells of the admissions of Foundling's Hospital. Rousseau's found-

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lings probably did not grow up; the odds against a child of the mideighteenth century surviving in the hospital for as long as five years were about four to one.

[2]J. Guehénno, *Jean-Jacques* (Paris, 1948–1952), vol. 2, p. 57f. Rousseau gives a somewhat different account of Mme. de Luxembourg's involvement in *Confessions*, p. 515f.

[3]*Confessions*, p. 514; Hume to Comtesse de Boufflers, January 19, 1766. Hume saw Sultan as maintaining complete dominion over Rousseau. We are also presented with a historical puzzle; when Rousseau, Hume, and their colleague slept in the same small room of a French inn on the way to England, where was Sultan? Perhaps Hume did not say in his sleep "Je tiens Rousseau!" but, rather, "Je tiens des puces!"

[4]*Les Rêveries du promeneur solitaire* (1778/1782), (Paris: Editions Bordas, 1968), Fourth Promenade, lines 1389–1393; Ninth Promenade, lines 3166–3214, selected. Translation for the present article by Lisa Mann Burke.

[5]Quotations are from *The reveries of a solitary*, trans. J. C. Fletcher (London, 1927), p. 178. I am not unaware of the infusion through my quotations from the *Rêveries* of the theme of looking. "Staring," "eyes," "looking," "watching" are more than stylistic tics; they are, as Crocker points out, an essential part of Rousseau's definition of himself and society. See L. G. Crocker, *Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, 2 vols. (New York, 1968–1973), passim.

[6]Rousseau's pedagogical writings are collected in volume 4 of *Oeuvres complètes de Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, ed. Bernard Gagnebin and Marcel Raymond (Paris: Gallimard, 1959–1969, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade). Rousseau's letter to his father is quoted on p. xix. The story of the tantrum is told in *Emile*, trans. Barbara Foxley (London, 1911), p. 86. Rousseau's documents of condemnation are cited in note 18. With great regret, I cannot here discuss the implications for child psychology and education of Rousseau's view of women.

[7]J. H. Huizinga, *Rousseau: The Self-Made Saint* (New York, 1976); Ernst Cassirer, *The Question of Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, trans. Peter Gay (New York, 1954); Edouard Claparède, "Jean Jacques Rousseau et la conception fonctionelle de l'enfance," *Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale*, 20 (1912): 391–416.

[8]Crocker, *Rousseau*, passim. Arthur O. Lovejoy, "The supposed primitivism of Rousseau's *Discourse on Inequality*," reprinted in *Essays in the History of Ideas* (Baltimore, Md., 1948), pp. 14–37.

[9]For Piaget's development of Rousseau's fundamental insights and their transformation into a neo-Kantian psychology, see Jean Piaget, *Origins of Intelligence* (New York, 1952).

[10]*The Government of Poland*, trans. Willmoore Kendall (Indianapolis, Ind., 1972).

[11]Crocker, *Rousseau*, vol. 2, p. 335. With Rousseau's snobbery about social class put aside, the finest representation of his ideas in political practice was Mao Tse-tung's China.

[12]I have used, as appropriate, Judith H. McDowell's translation and abridgment of *Julie* [*La Nouvelle Héloïse* (University Park, Md., 1968)], William Kenrick's [*Eloisa*, 4 vols. (London, 1761)], or, rarely, my own. Unfortunately, McDowell has deleted from her translation, the only modern one, most of the comments on child-rearing and education.

Julie adds to her description of Wolmar another of Jean-Jacques' obsessions. "[His] greatest delight is observation." The portrait of Wolmar is balanced somewhat by the news that he cried at Julie's death (the first tears since his birth) but put back in its proper frame by his placidly posting Julie's deathbed lovenote to Saint-Preux.

[13]*Eloisa*, vol. 3, p. 275.

[14]Ibid., p. 273; my translation from the Garnier edition of *Julie*, p. 350. Other stories in *Julie* indicate that the rule of necessity often meant that the more powerful, even among the children, got what they wanted. I have, incidentally, altogether ignored Rousseau's long encomia to physical fitness; he maintains that the *best* of Locke, Rollin, Fleury, and DeCrouzas was their emphasis on the child's physical prowess.

[15]Cassirer, *Rousseau*, p. 73, p. 82.

[16]Huizinga, *Rousseau*, p. 234.

[17]The *Annual Register*, or a *View of the History, Politicks, and Literature, of the Year 1762* (London, 1763), p. 225.

[18]*The Annual Register of 1759* (London, 1760), pp. 479–484; *The Annual Register of 1761* (London, 1762), pp. 208–210; the Parlement's ruling of June 9, 1762 is in *Censure de la Faculté de Théologie de Paris, contre le livre qui a pour titre, Emile, ou de l'éducation* (Paris, 1763).

[19]Maria and Richard Lovell Edgeworth, *Practical Education*, 2 vols. (London, 1798), vol. 1, p. 191, p. 167.

[20]Kate Silber, *Pestalozzi: The Man and His Work* (London, 1960), passim. Pestalozzi's paper on elementary education was not published until 1821.

[21]Johann Friedrich Herbart, *The Science of Education: Its General Principles Deduced from Its Aim and the Aesthetic Revelation of the World* (Göttingen, 1806). Translation by Henry M. and Emmie Felkin (New York, 1892), p. 251. Herbart was not a Fichtean, but one can see the directions of German nationalistic education in his work.

[22]Bruce Allen Ronda, "The Transcendental Child: Images and Concepts of the Child in American Transcendentalism," Yale Dissertation, 1975, University Microfilm 76-13, 750.

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[23]R. H. Quick, *Jean Jacques Rousseau* (Syracuse, 1886).

[24]Carleton Washburne, *A Living Philosophy of Education* (New York, 1940), p. 203; Ellwood P. Cubberly, *An Introduction to the Study of Education and Teaching* (New York, 1925), p. 152f.; Joseph Kinmont Hart, *A Social Interpretation of Education* (New York, 1929), p. 144.

[25]See, especially, John Dewey, *Democracy and Education* (New York, 1916). John P. Wayne, in *Theories of Education* (New York, 1963) uses recent Rousseau scholarship to draw the critical distinction between "natural unfoldment" and "natural perfection" in Jean-Jacques' writing on children.

[26]Philippe Ariès, *Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life*, trans. Robert Baldick (London, 1962), p. 119; Granville Stanley Hall, *Adolescence: Its Psychology and Its Relation to Physiology, Anthropology, Sociology, Sex, Crime, Religion, and Education*, 2 vols. (New York, 1904), vol. 1, p. 319f.

[27]Freud's references to Rousseau are in the *Drei Abhandlungen zür Sexualtheorie* (1905), *Der Wahn und die Traüme in W. Jensens 'Gravida'* (1907), Zeitgemasses über Krieg und Tod (*Imago*, 1915), and *Das Unbehagen in der Kultur* (1930); Paul H. Mussen, ed., *Carmichael's Manual of Child Psychology* (New York, 1970); R. H. Quick, *Rousseau;* Herbert Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization* (Boston, 1955), p. 206.

[28]"Gay in company, . . ." are adjectives used by Hume and his friends just before and during the English fiasco, but similar praise and affection were expressed by Mme. de Boufflers, Diderot, Malesherbes, and a long list of others.

Voltaire's remark was made in a letter to Damilaville several months after the publication and seizure of the *Emile*. See Theodore Besterman, *Voltaire's Correspondence* (Geneva, 1959), vol. 50, p. 80. The modern quotation is from Kurt R. Eissler. Death drive, ambivalence, and narcissism. *Psychoanalytic Study of the Child, 26* (1971): 25–78. Rousseau's undoubtable clinical narcissism is shown repeatedly (and without direct citation of Rousseau as case in point) in psychoanalytic writings on the disturbance. See, in particular, Heinz Kohut, "Thoughts on Narcissism and Narcissistic Rage," *Psychoanalytic Study of the Child*, 27 (1972): 360–400.

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JOSEPH FEATHERSTONE

Rousseau and Modernity

THOSE WHO DOUBT THAT IDEAS PLAY AN IMPORTANT PART IN HISTORY should take two steps to remedy their mistake. First they should read Jean-Jacques Rousseau's great Enlightenment treatise on human nature and education, *Emile*. Then they should tour the world, looking at families and schools dealing with young children. From Los Angeles to Dar-es-Salaam, parents and teachers are pursuing "natural" modes of child-rearing, a pursuit as old and as young as modernization itself. Rousseau set the terms of a long conversation on families, education, politics, and modernity that is still going on.

John Locke's radical new portrait of human nature and his revolutionary insistence that experience, not tradition, is the great teacher, mark the beginning of the conversation. It becomes a true dialogue, however, with Rousseau's dissent from Locke and Descartes. Locke is the quintessential modernizer, proclaiming that human beings are in some fashion free, equal, and rational. Rousseau is a modernizer, too. He accepts Locke's three premises, and builds on them himself, but he sees how each of them could take a wrong turning, and in his warnings about the possible disastrous consequences of the Enlightenment's ideals, makes himself into the first great countermodern intellectual, the first to insist on the need for a new polity, a new culture, and new modes of child-rearing to neutralize the acids of modernization. The dialogue between Locke and Rousseau thus reflects the emergence of that cluster of social forces and ideas we vaguely call "modernity." I am using the term to mean the triple revolutions of modern times: the great transformations in science, industry, and politics.

What follows is an attempt to explore two of the main issues Rousseau raises—"Romanticism" and "progress"—and to look at their significance in the long conversation on modernity. To do this I am going to focus on his ideas about childhood and education; my main text will be the *Emile*. I will finish by showing why Rousseau can be a particularly fascinating figure for students of the American response to modernity. The old Progressive literary historian, Vernon Parrington, was comically off the mark in insisting that Rousseau was a major influence on American thought, but not at all wrong to sense that the issues raised by Rousseau and something called "Romanticism" were perhaps central to the American experience of modernization.

Modernization is the catchall term for an appalling complex of social, economic, and political processes: economic development, industrial expansion,

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urban growth, bureaucratic regulation and rationality, the growth of mass participation in politics, conscious social policy, and the invention of new institutions to make up for the shattering of traditional ones—all in a context of a continuous pressure to raise productivity and advance economic development. Why modernization happened is still a question historians argue about. Those who have simple answers have not done justice to the complexity of the evidence. Scholars emphasize different aspects of the tangle of phenomena: capitalism; industrialization; the secular state; the quickening of the pace of change itself; the division of labor; the growth in social complexity; changes in religion, in conceptions of love, courtship, and marriage, and in demography, especially birth and death rates; shifts in the relationship of men, women, and children to the three crucial realms of work, family, and leisure; the spread of new ideas, tastes, and values—equality, personal autonomy, and rationality. Some scholars focus on the shift in forms of social and industrial organization to specialized and minutely divided subunits, to bureaucracy. Some of the recent work in social history stresses shifts in the character of the family from an economic unit of production to a unit of consumption, leisure, and child-rearing. The parent–child bond changes from something mainly economic to something mainly emotional. And closely bound up with all these changes was the rise of institutions consciously designed to offset the collapse of traditional institutions. Schools were part of the institutional response to modernity. Schools represented rationalizing progress in the minds of figures like Horace Mann; they were also meant as communal counterweights to the imbalances of unchecked economic and technological change, the chief of which were thought to be the destruction or at least the weakening of the fabric of traditional life.

Our debate does not have a very long history. Since Philippe Ariès' work, *Centuries of Childhood*, we have been getting used to the idea that our ideas about childhood—and our ideas about adolescence, youth, and, for that matter, old age—are very much time-bound and culture-bound. Whereas children in the West used to be thought of more or less as adults in miniature, masses of people have come to view childhood as a distinct time with special needs. As a body of thought about children, their minds, and how they learn develops, the dialogue about children is influenced by the growing number of institutions for them. The institutions, for all their defects, mark a pronounced shift in the status of children in the West over the last two hundred years. Our culture today places more value on children, makes more room for their uniqueness and diversity, and takes a greater interest in their learning than it did in the past. I am not saying we already are a child-centered culture, whatever that might mean. The absence of financial and emotional support for many children; the existence of hungry children; the presence of battered, bored, miserable, drugged, and manipulated children in our midst; the generally low quality of our collective institutional arrangements for children—all raise grave doubts about the place of children in our society. We do not have a great deal to congratulate ourselves for. But we are more of a child-centered society than we were in the past we sometimes sentimentalize so shamelessly. Large numbers of thoughtful parents and professionals appreciate children, and children themselves have moved from being marginal and exploited figures to being culture heroes of a sort, a position not without its own drawbacks. This is one of the reasons we are so

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deeply interested in following the course of the long conversation Rousseau begins.

Rousseau versus Locke

Rousseau is the great *moraliste* of modernization. He sees modernization in moral, political, and cultural terms. In all three realms, he is a psychologist, with both the weaknesses and the strengths of an essentially psychological approach. Today his intellectual descendants, such as Christopher Lasch, in his countermodern polemic, *Haven in a Heartless World*, continue Rousseau's habit of mixing brilliant psychological and moral penetration with a general vagueness when it comes to questions of social and economic structure.

The psychology of modernity is the main thing, then. It consists of two parts: a moral pathology and a statement of human possibility. The moral pathology, the more famous of the two, is described in Rousseau's well-known account of the dividedness, alienation, and inner deadness of modernity. Rousseau portrays moderns as cut off from nature and a healthy social life alike. His pathology demonstrates the catastrophic consequences of the failure of community. A healthy person needs social support and a sense of self. Moderns lack both. In the artificial and unequal world of civilized life, our social nature conceals and deforms the underlying natural self. Rousseau frames his criticisms in terms of a quest for a norm of public decency that would mesh private and public selves, eliminating the need for masks and lies. (The belief that there could in theory be such a mesh distinguishes him from later, more despairing and nihilistic twentieth-century theorists of sincerity and authenticity.) The Western patient, in Rousseau's diagnosis, suffered from a false sentiment of being. People's sense of themselves and their sense of value were social creations, products of the "empire of opinion," not the promptings of their own nature and their own impulses. Without a sense of themselves, and lacking a true basis of value, people were unable to live and feel in the present. Their lives were blocked. Society keeps generating false desires, nostalgias, hopes, and needs. Rousseau's ideal is a unitary, undivided existence, supported either by a protective family or by the polity. The chief threats to a self that is whole and of a piece are the fickleness of the imagination itself, change, inequality, social complexity, and the social division of labor. This is why "progress" is the issue. Rousseau appreciates the advantages of the division of labor, yet he sees the possibility of a society that is at the same time interdependent and at war within itself. He compares complex social life to a banquet in which workers all over the world toil so the rich can glut themselves. His essential metaphor for the underlying barbarism of all existing society is savage, unreflecting carnivorousness.

This morbid social psychology is grounded in a psychology of development, a norm of human possibility and "natural" growth that is a response to Locke. Rousseau's qualified dissent from the psychology of John Locke and Descartes introduces an important theme: it is the effort to rescue Western man from the nihilistic consequences of one version of modernity, the dualities imposed by seventeenth-century science, which broke the world into rival realms of spirit and matter and suggested that the basic underlying reality was matter.

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Rousseau borrows from Locke's psychology, but he tries to reintegrate mind and body, heart and mind, to achieve a unified, unalienated consciousness. Rousseau's complaint about his divided inner self is a crucial moment, the point at which the forces of modernization were producing a countermodern consciousness: "We ourselves are but the least part of ourselves." *Emile* is one of the greatest and most comprehensive attempts to balance contrary realms, to achieve what I shall call a high Romantic mediation of thought and feeling, a new countermodern and Romantic psychology that was to underlie the pursuit of what were later to be termed the New Education, the New Child, the New Man, and, eventually, the New Woman.

Education is a particularly fascinating window on modernization and the response to it, because the transmission of culture to the young across the generations becomes a highly conscious affair once a traditional culture starts modernizing, often the first item of articulate public policy. In the history of educational policy we can see the paradoxical attempt of each modernizing culture to become conscious of and to design arrangements that in an earlier day were not matters of conscious thought and policy at all. It is sometimes like the effort to make the instinctive something conscious and developed. Formal education is a symptom of the shock of modernization. The builders and rationalizers of our present educational system assumed they were confronting an immense crisis, that the traditional modes of passing on culture from families to children were breaking down, and that henceforth rearing and educating children would become more of a public responsibility. In all its forms, Rousseau's New Education and his utopian vision of the new educative and therapeutic private family explore the contours of the basic paradox of the effort to contrive by thought and artifice "natural" modes of child-rearing, teaching, and learning.

John Locke ends his essay *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* by explaining that it was written for those who venture to consult their own reason in the rearing of children, rather than wholly to rely on old custom. This is the central argument of what was to become the New Education: education and family life both need to respond to the great uprooting that is modernization. Some figures in the tradition are, like Locke, optimistic; others, like Rousseau, face the future with fear and foreboding. Rousseau realizes that if uncertainty is to become the norm of existence, then Everyman must be raised as an adventurer, a Ulysses armed with all the weapons of reason. He sees that in some sense the web of tradition is breaking down. He views the collapse in political and psychological terms—perhaps moral is the best word—not in economic terms. For all Rousseau knows, the economy of his day is identical with that of the time of Plotinus. His cyclical, static view of history is not modern in the slightest, and his famous argument that progress of the arts and sciences means the decay of human virtue and community is in part simply an echo of a commonplace of eighteenth-century thought. The great pathologist of modernity is in many respects a premodern, closer to the outlook of the city-states of antiquity than to our world of multinational corporations. Yet his antennae are acute. Emile, he says, must be reared as a man, and not as a member of the privileged classes, because the existing order will be overthrown. Things would be better if all men were firmly rooted in the soil of their own country, Rousseau sighs, "But when we consider the fleeting nature of the times, when every generation over-

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turns the work of its predecessor, can we conceive a more senseless plan than to educate a child as if he would not leave the room?"

Locke and Rousseau are both political modernizers: they attack patriarchy. Yet Rousseau's insistence on a return to nature strikes a new, cultural note in the great conversation, the central item in a countermodern attack on modernity that has grown in strength as modernization has proceeded apace. Rousseau believes that conscious thought and action must offset the imbalances of modernity by restoring a proper balance between nature and human nature. The tension between their rival ideas of civilization and nature is central to the dialogue initiated by Rousseau and Locke. For example, Locke's motto for child-rearing is the modernizer's characteristic refrain: check the impulse. Rousseau launches the countermodern movement of thought with the opposite plea: honor the impulse. These are the two great refrains in the Western dialogue on the implications of modernity for raising children. These two basic positions have existed not just in modern times, but in tradition, too; this is where Philippe Ariès goes awry, for all the considerable light he has cast on the emergence of childhood in the West.

Childhood itself is, as Ariès says, a relatively recent invention, in the West, at least, and by and large the dominant traditional account of children reflected Christian doctrines of original sin. Yet there is a clear minor strain of thought that drew on the New Testament and Jewish tradition to emphasize children's innocence, too. To enter the kingdom of heaven, Christ said, we must become as children, and a number of figures in Christian tradition pointed to the special importance of childhood. Very broadly speaking, the two alternative Christian responses to childhood reflected a larger tension within Christianity between the followers of St. Augustine and those who side with Augustine's great opponent, Pelagius. The Augustinians stress the utter sinfulness and wickedness of human nature; the Pelagians insist on its potential for goodness and autonomy. Throughout Western history the two points of view have prompted very different courses of conduct, alternative views of what we might nowadays call social policy. To order people's sinfulness and guide them in their weakness, Augustine wanted a total city of God on earth. He is like Dostoyevsky's Grand Inquisitor, who insists that, above all, people in their weakness need miracle, mystery, and authority. The Pelagians, believing in man's goodness, reason, and capacity for autonomous choice, have wanted not one city of God, but a city of plural choices. By the time of the Enlightenment, figures like Rousseau are rebels against Christianity, but they also draw on Christian tradition in their rebellion. Ariès ignores the way that these different strains of Christian tradition flowed into what he rightly sees as a new seventeenth- and eighteenth-century interest in childhood. And thus he misses out on the doubleness of the modern response to childhood, too.

Locke can be thought of as speaking for a predominantly repressive mode of child-rearing—an inner-directed mode, to resurrect David Riesman's useful phrase. Rousseau, on the other hand, represents a softer mode. But both want to do away with traditional modes of child-rearing. Both assume a new, highly self-conscious modern family dedicated to consumption, leisure, and, above all, rearing children. Both are explicitly addressing fathers as well as mothers. And of course both were talking to a very thin crust in the upper strata of their times.

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Lawrence Stone and other social historians are beginning to suggest that these ideas may well have both reflected and shaped reality. Such ideas spread from the literate upper middle classes and the aristocratic elites of the eighteenth century to masses of parents. Pierre Bezuhov, in Tolstoy's *War and Peace* tells his wife, Natasha, that Rousseau advocates breast-feeding, and then is astonished when she proceeds to put the theory into practice. No one imagined how influential, in the end, the ideas of the philosophers would be.

John Locke's thinking about childhood also drew on these contrary strains of thought about childhood, but because he was preeminently a philosopher of the mind and politics, his treatise on the education of children reads like an extrapolation from philosophy and politics, even though he drew on his own experiences as a tutor. Everything about Locke's ideas on child-rearing suggests the disruption of the older, patriarchal orders. In traditional orders, child-rearing is not usually a very conscious matter. Parents do what their parents did before them. Sex roles may or may not be clearly defined; but there is not necessarily a clear division of labor in child-rearing; children learn many of their future roles by working with mothers and fathers in fields and in the house. Education—the transmission of culture across the generations—is on the whole profoundly unconscious and informal, although churches, apprenticeships, and schools educate some in more formal and conscious ways. And it is exactly this that Locke wishes to change. He rebels against this traditional world, with its received ideas, its sacred notion of authority, including the authority of kings and fathers, its inability to separate politics from religion and the sanctions of hopes for heaven and fears of hell, and its incapacity to acknowledge new sources of authority. Locke's rebellion is severely moderate, to be sure. In many ways it is the anarchy and looseness of the older, feudal modes of child-rearing that appall him the most, just as it is the irrationality and arbitrary character of patriarchal authority that he hates. Locke's animus against the slovenliness of the regime of wet nurses and backstairs servants reflects a new moralizing ideal of the family: it is to be a private institution, not a crowd, and its function is to be deeply, anxiously concerned with the right upbringing of children, which can no longer be taken for granted. Children must be separated from the undisciplined elements of the adult world, and their characters must be shaped. Locke's child-rearing is above all an exercise in the creation of a social character. It is antitraditional and fundamentally repressive.

Locke's ideas about authority and the proper sort of child-rearing reflected his new view of human nature. The mind was a blank at birth, a *tabula rasa*. There were many subtleties and even contradictions in Locke's picture of the mind. There was, for example, a great tension between the passive role of the mind as it merely reflected sensation, and the active role Locke assigned to it in cataloguing, selecting, and ordering sensation, developing rational categories by which to order experience. In the empiricist tradition of which Locke is the founder, the tension persists. Locke's emphasis on the way empirical sensation bombards the blank mind is the essential metaphor, and it underlay the new emphasis on changing human nature through social engineering.

Locke became for a time a kind of bogey man to the religious and later the Romantics, but Locke himself, being the moderate he was, had tried to reconcile his ideas with religion and morals, and they often appeared in a form much

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softened by a very Protestant reading of his essentially secular and debunking skepticism. Locke's psychology was forever, at its base, reductionist: it stressed the way that the highest human thoughts and sentiments could be broken down into their component parts and analyzed as the result of mechanical sensory experience. Locke's mechanistic and passive account of the human mind got blurred over in the use evangelical Protestantism made of his ideas. It is wise to remember in making use of Locke as a handy symbol of scientific materialism and empiricism that he was used by the religious (Jonathan Edwards was a Lockean) and that, in fact, for much of the eighteenth and nineteenth century the most popular discussions of children's minds did not feature Locke's psychology at all; as William Kessen notes, many of the most popular debates were between supporters of the new evangelical portrait of children as innocents and the older Calvinist and Jansenist interpretations of them as willful and perverse creatures of sin. Figures like Horace Bushnell argued the case in America for a new "softer" religious conception of childhood and the role of the family as educator; making great inroads against the older view of children as imps of Satan, needing to be scourged to salvation.

We are thus not interested in Locke's views for their influence, which is always difficult to measure, but for what he shows about certain generic issues in the long debate on childhood and modernity. Locke was willing to compromise with religion. Yet he looked at children with wholly secular eyes. Sin was not an issue. Even so, the view of childhood he promoted saw children as distinctly flawed and inferior beings. The Lockean child is an incomplete adult, needing the constant attention of rational parents and teachers to mature properly. The basic stance of adults is outspokenly repressive. Locke's theories were part of developments in the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries that were to lead to the near-total Victorian division of sex-roles and in particular the feminization of child-rearing, teaching, and, especially in America, culture itself. Yet in Locke's terms, it is plain that he is also seeking to expand the role of the father now that childhood has become, so to speak, a policy matter. Locke is promoting a new role for fathers, a middle-class version of patriarchy in which authority is ultimately rational. And he is anticipating the nineteenth-century middle-class family style Freud was to interpret in terms of the myth of Oedipus. From today's perspective it is less the directly sexual character of the Oedipal problem that looks interesting and more the general question of power and authority: Locke is describing a mode of child-rearing that puts great stock in an internalized father. In the end, Locke's main concern seems to be to implant the right sort of conscience in children, to develop the right sort of social character.

Locke's fight against tradition was part of a battle against the inertia, passivity, emotionality, and cruelty and indifference of the old orders of child-rearing. Everywhere in the West modernity represented an assault on the passivity of the old orders; the modernizers like Locke wanted to exchange adaptive and self-reliant effort for the traditional acceptance of fate, the essential stoicism that marked so many traditional Western cultures, however greatly they may have varied in other respects. What became the new, modernizing, middle-class world stood for emotional control, the decline of the magical and the sacred; an end to older forms of community; a general repudiation of emotion and sponta-

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neity in favor of rationality and calculation; the creation of abstract and impersonal standards of behavior; and of course the separation of politics, economy, culture, family life, and religion into distinct realms.

Reading this history, Marx thought that the decisive fact was the way bourgeois society transformed all human links into exchange and market values. Later Tönnies and a vast sociological literature lamented it in classic terms as the change from community to society, from *Gemeinschaft* to *Gesellschaft*. Max Weber saw the growing rationalization and instrumentalization of modern life as a triumph of mechanism and rationality at the expense of the spirit. Weber's most famous line of interpretation traced much of the source of the great modern transformation to "the Protestant ethic," but "protestant" may, as Fred Weinstein and Gerald Platt argue in their interesting book, *The Wish To Be Free*, be only a specific instance of the general, widespread middle-class assault on traditional culture in the name of rationality, individualism, and autonomy. Romanticism is of course directly bound up with two facets of all this: the Romantic revolt against tradition in the name of an appeal to nature and a new image of human nature was part of the program of the modernizers; and yet the Romantic appeal to nature itself and a natural, generically human instinct of sympathy and community was a protest against the cold new abstractions of modernity.

Rousseau counters Locke down the line with an alternative set of propositions concerning childhood and the human mind, thus setting the terms of debates that are still current, such as the running controversy over the respective merits of environmentalism as against maturationalism (or, as it is sometimes called, nativism)—development from without versus development from within. Lockean psychology tends toward a rigid environmentalism. Cartesian thought tends toward a rigid faith in innate structures of cognition. Rousseau emerges as one of the great maturationalist opponents of Locke; he is faithful to Descartes in stressing the autonomous, rational power of the mind to order the world through its categories. However, Rousseau was also a close reader of Locke; he draws on Locke's empiricism in his rebellion against the dryness, abstraction, and cognitive tedium of Cartesian rationality. He is in pursuit of sentiment and the concrete, too, and for this he reads seventeenth- and eighteenth-century British psychology, as do all the Romantics intent on validating experience, stealing ideas from Locke in order to overthrow the scientism of Locke's universe. In fact, Rousseau's psychology of early childhood combines a thoroughgoing Lockean sensationalism and empiricism, especially in his account of the early years, with a developmentalist's account of the cognitive and abstracting powers of the Cartesian mind. Besides being a maturationalist, Rousseau is also an interactionist, one of the true sources of the naturalistic psychology of Jean Piaget and John Dewey.

The basic attitude toward the naked human impulse is a key issue. Locke wants to free the child from ancient mummeries, constraints, and artifice, but he is deeply suspicious of instinct, and mainly intent on molding free, rational, and equal beings into a social character that will conform to society. Rousseau believes, like so many of his Romantic followers, that the live instincts are more often right than the deadening dictates of social convention.

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Locke began his astonishingly revolutionary portrait of human nature by arguing that men are in some sense free, equal, and rational. The New Education is a long quest to make some sense of these ringing assertions. Yet Locke's educational thought is in many respects profoundly conservative, an attempt to counter the radical implications of such propositions for, now that the old irrational order of authority is gone, what will hold society together? Rousseau too thinks that potentially children are free, equal, and rational, but that these qualities are sure to make them unhappy unless they grow up in the right environment.

Like so many modernizers since his time, Locke keeps hoping that the consequences of modernization can be compartmentalized: that, for example, a rather conservative mode of child-rearing and education can raise Whig gentlemen trained to use the debunking tools of science in some realms, but not others. Locke keeps forgetting that it is impossible to be both a gentleman and a philosopher. He wants an end to the old patriarchy, but he would like to install a middle class version of the patriarchy in its place. He wants to channel the flow of modernity into proper places. Rousseau, like so many later countermoderns, keeps insisting that change in one area implies changes in all others: he senses more clearly than Locke that the drive for autonomy and equality would extend into all realms, including relations between the sexes and the politics of family life. This is why Rousseau is at the same time more radical than Locke and much more terrified at what might happen if modernity goes awry.

There are in fact only two fundamental psychologies in the long Western conversations on modernity. One is Locke's, stressing the impact of elemental units of sensory experience on the mind which somehow build up into complex ideas. The other is Descartes': ideas mainly derive from innate cognitive structures of the mind. One sees the mind as a mirror of experience; the other as a lamp. These two fundamental psychologies get extended in complex ways; they are the building blocks of most later psychological theories. They are reworked to form two additional compound psychologies. Thus, a third psychology, emerging out of Descartes, Kant, and the Romantic movement, emphasizes the profoundly maturational character of the mind's growth over time. Descartes' stress on innate structures continues in this psychology, but now the entire picture is one of organic evolution and unfolding stages of development. The force of inner growth tends to be the main theme of the maturationalists. Then there is another compound psychology, the fourth basic psychology of the New Education: it presents an essentially interactionist model of the mind in dialectical interchanges with its environment. This is the psychology of Dewey and Piaget. Neither nature nor nurture, by this account, explains development and the formation of ideas, for they are products of interplay between the live creature and its surroundings, the results of action.

One fascinating thing about *Emile* is that each of these four psychologies emerges fragmentarily in Rousseau's account of human development. He is a Lockean sensationalist concerning the early years when sensory experience and sense-training are what matter. Then the psychology at points grows more Cartesian and, as we might say, Kantian, with a terrific emphasis on the mind's role in creating the categories of thought. All along, however, there is a profound

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maturationalism behind Rousseau's portrait. And, off and on, the model of development is interactionist, the product of a byplay between Emile and his environment.

Of all these psychologies, however, the one Rousseau loves to stress is inner maturation. It is, perhaps, unique to Rousseau: the profound, developmental emphasis on the forward drive of growth itself, the dynamism of a life force unfolding inside the child. This is what Rousseau thinks of as "nature," and it is why he and those who follow him believe that there is something elemental and even sacred about impulse. Impulse is the source of growth, the fountain of self-renewal—a corrupt and jaded civilization's last contact with nature itself. Rousseau's Romantic religion is life; the native impulse is its sacrament.

As against Locke, Rousseau argues that childhood is natural and complete unto itself, to be taken on its own terms. Rousseau sees children as whole beings put together in ways that are organically appropriate to their need to grow. He wants the family to become more conscious about child-rearing; but he opposes Locke's meddling didacticism root and branch. Nature endows children with an order of development that ensures healthy growth. Much of what Rousseau has to say about education is negative; the basic message is: hands off. John Dewey was quite right to trace his own central educational metaphor, "growth," back to Rousseau, whose *Emile* abounds with organic imagery. Dewey's ideal of nature is a complex and even baffling blend of Darwinian science and a revived version of vitalistic Romanticism. Rousseau's is also complex, because he is a rationalist, a *philosophe*, as well as a Romantic. Although complex, it is reasonably clear, however: nature for Rousseau is a kind of norm of health, the true potential underlying the perversions of civilized life—rather like the genuine head of hair under a powdered wig, or the tree as nature intended it, not the clipped and artificial tree in a formal garden. The meddling of parents and teachers distorts the natural sequences of growth. Rousseau doesn't deny the need for adult guidance—many have found the tutor in *Emile* to be an intolerable manipulator—and he agrees that children will not learn mathematics or morality without guidance. To gain the Socratic goal of freedom, Emile's tutor often resorts to Platonic means, including lies and manipulation. Rousseau insists, however, that a teacher has to accept the priority of natural development and the normal succession of stages of growth. As William Kessen puts it, he wants teachers and parents to respect the coherence of the child's mind at each stage of his growth and tailor pedagogy to the individual child. Rousseau thinks of the child as uncorrupted: morally neutral, perhaps, but unspoiled and therefore potentially good. As Kessen says, Rousseau's child has a potential for healthy development, a powerful inner force and unfolding inner structures of growth that do not fit at all with the essentially passive and external picture of the mind in Locke's psychology. Rousseau's child, overflowing with the momentum of his own growth, is a profoundly active being, light years away from the children of subsequent classic learning theory and stimulus-response research. If Locke is the Ur-behaviorist, the ancestor of such current figures as B. F. Skinner, then Rousseau, much more than Descartes, is the great-granddaddy of all the maturationalists, those who stress the inner sources of natural growth and development, from anarchists like Tolstoy to Arnold Gesell, Freudians of the Left and Right, A. S. Neill of Summerhill, the free school movement of the

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late 1960s, and the whole genial, if often sentimental nursery school orthodoxy that hopes children will bloom like flowers.

Rousseau and Romanticism

Over the years, both admirers and critics of Rousseau have spoken of him as a Romantic. Irving Babbitt thought, quite mistakenly, that he was demolishing Rousseau in calling him a Romantic, while, years later, lecturing in Babbitt's old classroom at Harvard, the late Perry Miller used to praise Rousseau as a true Romantic. My vote goes with Miller, whose reading of Rousseau and his relationship to modernity has shaped my own. In any case it is time to define Romanticism, at least provisionally. Romanticism comes in many varieties, but most of them can be described in terms of a rebellion and a quest. The rebellion is against the modernizing, reductionist portrait of human nature offered by seventeenth- and eighteenth-century science; the quest is for a fuller portrait of human nature that would do justice to human autonomy, value, and the creative capacity of the imagination to renew itself. In a general way, the *Emile* was a profound influence on Romanticism, which has been a dominant mode of thought in Anglo-American culture since the childhood of Wordsworth. Tony Tanner, Richard Chase, Leo Marx, and a host of other literary critics have shown us how central Romanticism is to American literature. Now it is time for us to see that American philosophical and educational traditions are also steeped in the modes and dilemmas of Romanticism. From Rousseau on, an important line of social, political, and educational criticism has contrasted the alienation and dividedness and deadness of modern life with the child's wholeness and wholeheartedness. It is necessary here to make a distinction between low and high varieties of Romanticism. Low Romanticism exalts the intuitive and disdains rationality. High Romanticism, on the other hand, is a quest for a proper mediated balance between reason and feeling. High Romanticism works toward an ideal that may be inherently unstable, an ideal of the imagination guided by reason and reinforced by feeling. The enemy of high Romanticism is not science, but scientism, all the reductionist modes of thought that falsely pretend to give a complete account of human complexity and deny the capacity of the imagination for freedom.

In these terms, it is essential to stress, Rousseau is plainly a very high sort of Romantic, a spokesman for the Age of Reason, as well as a dissenter from the excesses of reason. He is a countermodern, but unlike many of his intellectual heirs in recent years, he is very far from disdaining reason and analysis. More recent countercultural theorists would undoubtedly feel uncomfortable with Rousseau's commitment to disciplined thought and science. Emile is to become a *philosophe*, a man of reason whose mind is in the service of a sensibility, a rational thinker who is not afraid to cry. He must understand the general rational design of nature as well as the mazes of the human heart, Rousseau's version of Kant's two sovereign realities, the starry heavens above and the moral law within.

Because of its ultimate goal of a high Romantic synthesis or mediation of reason and feeling, Rousseau's entire scheme of education is essentially protective; he is worried that a false step might impair the fusion of different realms

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and qualities later required for mature, sound judgment. He never wants to slow up development or stop growth, for after all, man is not meant to remain a child. Childhood is the sleep of reason; but man is not born to slumber forever. Rousseau aims at producing a mature philosopher out of the child by slow steps. It was Wordsworth and later Romantics (many of them much lower Romantics than Wordsworth) who took the radical step of talking as though the child were a philosopher already. And British Romantics like Wordsworth only spoke of children as seers and prophets. It took an American, of course—Bronson Alcott, the ideological ancestor of the "free" schools of the late 1960s—actually to act on this dubious premise.

So Rousseau's relationship to what is generally called Romanticism is real, but complicated. He is most certainly a part of the revolutionary spirit in politics and literature that put the claims of the heart and the individual first—the extension of the Enlightenment's revolution into cultural realms—but his ideal of the human mind is balanced and complex, moderate. Like all the great later figures in the child-centered tradition, he is pursuing a complex and dialectical vision of human development—a high Romantic vision. The exercise of the full powers of mind and heart in the act of imagining is for Rousseau one of the wonders of natural man. The capacity for this exercise is one of Rousseau's fundamental tests for the adequacy of existing social institutions.

The famous description of the sunrise in the *Emile* and Rousseau's general account of the workings of the imagination show Rousseau as one of the great early psychologists of the mind's renewal through the exercise of the imagination. Nonetheless, it is true that Rousseau is also a skeptic and a Stoic, forever undercutting his own high Romantic hopes by pointing to the power of the imagination to evade reality. Rousseau is suspicious of the imagination (and the arts and sciences) because he knows that the greatest sources of human misery also come from the free power of the imagination to evade the present by hoping, foolishly, for the future, and longing, vainly, for a vanished past. Emerson's famous basic Romantic doctrine of "the blank or ruin that we see is in our own eye" would strike Rousseau as something full of tragic potential, not a reason for hope. Yet Rousseau, like Emerson, also believes that the creativity and love of the mind can make a paradise (however momentarily) of common things.

The Romantics who followed Rousseau imitated him in opening up the exploration of the subjective world, but they were able to do this profitably, as Walter Jackson Bate keeps reminding us, because the high Romantics among them refused to see subjectivity as an end in itself. Romanticism and its child or grandchild, modernism, have a special interest in the subjective workings of the imagination, for both cultural movements are trying to propose modes of self-renewal in the face of the alienations and divisions and inner death of modern culture. Yet in the famous sketch of the sunrise in the *Emile*, Rousseau is turning the mind outward as well as inward. Whatever turns the subjective mind outward—to social responsibility or to the discipline of natural things—has both moral potential and potential for healing; the naked impulse and the subjective self are the starting point for all renewal, but the circle must round on itself, and the mind must reenter the world. As a Platonic *moraliste* Rousseau is deeply opposed to art, yet in these passages, he is showing that the fusion of Locke's empiricism with a new organic point of view was possible, and that the result

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would be a high Romantic psychology of renewal. This psychology sees the working of the imagination as a dialectic, a conversation between inner powers and an external reality. The greatest Romantics make art the supreme example of how the mind and art itself can renew themselves through intercourse with the twin inexhaustibilities of nature and imagination. As Bate puts it, turning inward is a way of recapturing a belief in the reality, or at least the potential, of a unity of being.

Imagination is thus in Romantic tradition (and I am speaking of philosophers and social theorists here, not merely of literary figures like Blake and Wordsworth) noetic, an odd old word that suggests a means of apprehending the truth. The tradition holds that the educative power of art goes far beyond its capacity to render one kind of truth; art educates because in its various modes it reaches the whole human being and intensifies the germinal imaginative powers of growth and development in its readers and audiences. Later, Coleridge would give theoretical expression to an argument Rousseau only suggests; and still later, in works like *Art as Experience*, John Dewey would make a major bid to turn philosophy and aesthetics into a high Romantic developmental psychology of the imagination's renewal.

Rousseau and the Romantics struggle over what to do when a divided mind stops realizing itself, when the soul goes dead. The Romantic quest for living power—for life itself—against the deadening order of mechanism is at the heart of the struggle. One suspects the countermodern figures like Rousseau and Coleridge fight so hard to free themselves from Locke not because his psychology is false, but because too often in their lives it rings true, and they need rescuing from it.

The interplay of subjectivity and objectivity is critical to all the psychologies of imaginative renewal following Rousseau. The greatest of the myths the mind makes are not escapes from reality, but reality itself, embodied in projection and recognition. The imagination, the source of so much error, trouble, and sadness for Rousseau, is also the great wellspring of renewal.

The Child

The imagination as the source of countermodern imagery and thought is one theme of Rousseau's, although on this his is a deeply divided mind, as it is on the intertwined themes of modernity and Romanticism. Rousseau's discovery of childhood is an episode in the West's changing appreciation of children, in the use of childhood as a countermodern symbol of wholeness and an unalienated outlook.

The interest in childhood is part of the Romantic interest in uniqueness. To generalize, as Blake puts it, is to be an idiot. Man is a meaning-maker, and he makes the unique conditions for his own renewal, especially, as Blake and Wordsworth followed Rousseau in insisting, out of the experiences of childhood. The Romantic cult of sensibility, the noble savage, and children's innocence which Rousseau began led to egotism, nostalgia, sentimentality, and the other forms of evasion of reality we rightly attack when we think of the weak-headed side of all the various Romanticisms. And there is no doubt that such evasions occur in the thinking of the strongest Romantics, as when Rousseau

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sighs heavily over the supposed innocence of children, or when Dickens descends into the bathosphere. Yet like Dickens, Rousseau can also be a vigorous high Romantic and countermodern, insisting that the test of a culture is the individual's spontaneous life—the child's sense of wonder being an emblem of the human imagination's capacity for fully experienced vitality. In both its wonderful strengths and its appalling weaknesses, the Romantic intellectual tradition Rousseau contributes to is a religion of life. Harold Bloom calls it a doomed, yet self-renewing tradition, doomed, because in the end its prophets are destined to encounter the final constraint—death itself—yet self-renewing, because the struggle against what the early Romantics called death-in-life recurs each day in the life of every generation. Romanticism remains the underlying cultural mode for Anglo-Americans and for many Europeans too. We can hope to go beyond it—we have to—but we shall have to go through it, which means coming to a better appreciation of its generic strengths and delusions.

Rousseau's arguments about nature and childhood become part of an important assault on the world-view of Locke, Bentham, and Mr. Gradgrind. The attack is based on a fundamentally countermodern and developmental picture of human nature that emphasizes spontaneity and creative autonomy. For all its origins in Romantic doctrines of individualism, individual growth and personal development, the argument insists that the capitalist doctrine of self-interest is in the end a philosophy of death. Casting social criticism in the form of a battle between life and death is the essence of this Romantic position, and from it have emerged some of the most powerful and moving critical accounts of modernity, as well as a very great deal of cant. The image of childhood in this countermodern tradition reflects values of spontaneity, disinterestedness, love, wonder, and the capacity of every person to make meanings and fashion symbols of experience. As Peter Coveney and Tony Tanner have reminded us, the literature of childhood from the great Romantics on is an attack on industrial capitalism and a vindication of human nature, a criticism of industrial life from the standpoint of a religion of life. It may be called a religious literature—all Romanticism is, after all, a kind of spilt religion, but generally a religion of this world. Even Blake, Christian that he is, insists: "Thou art man; God is no more/Thy own humanity learn to adore."

And what a mixed bag Romanticism is regarding childhood: on the weak-headed side, it expresses hostility to logical analysis, a contempt for form, a suspicion of intellect, and a reluctance to draw up a complex balance sheet on modern society and life itself. Its weaknesses are those of an intensely subjective and private sort—what we mean when we use Romantic as a term of disapproval. The strengths of this mode and its tradition are its integrity, its sense of wonder, its refusal to be complacent, and its profound understanding of human development. As in the *Emile*, the image of childhood can stand for sentimentality and rancor, but also for a spirit of undefeated life.

Emile's education is at times a window opening onto life; at other times, it is clearly an escape from life, an idyll, a pastorale in the bad and sentimental sense, a retreat from life into a pervasive pity—Rousseau's endless, condescending pity for mankind and his own bottomless self-pity. Even the strongest figures in Rousseau's line sometimes retreat into subjectivity, nostalgia, and pity as they pursue the memory of their own childhood. This is a note that

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Dickens sounds too often, for all his true greatness. The path from Emile to J. M. Barrie's Peter Pan is the distance from a robust, engaged Romanticism to the end of a spent movement.

Some of the greatest figures in the line are mainly expressing a low Romantic rebellion against the monopoly of reason, but in the hands of the Blakes, the rebellion is rich in implication of the power of the mind to fuse and synthesize experience and thus to grow, to find harmony and that deep power of joy Wordsworth spoke of, to locate what he calls the secret path to the hiding places of power. For the richest figures in the line, as for Rousseau, the point of making use of childhood is not a repudiation of adult existence, but a search for essential continuities in the lifelong drama of renewal. Through the image of the child's sense of wonder, the great Romantic writers deal with the possibilities for the human race, dramatizing the chasm between reason and feeling. But, as Coveney says, the literature of childhood, in making its protest, often ends up falsifying children's true nature. The child is the image for a philosophy of development and growth, but the child can also be a symbol of retreat, a wish for death itself.

This tremendous doubleness reflects a division within high Romanticism. Rousseau describes Emile's childhood as a dynamic drama of development; he also paints it as a harmonious, insipid idyll.

Rousseau hopes for an education that will unify nature, things, and man, but he has two different visions of unity. One is a simple, minimalist ideal of peace and stasis: the unity that comes when we teach ourselves, stoically, not to want what is out of our reach. The other is unity achieved through a dynamic Romantic ideal of growth and change, often the product of conflict. The first expresses a retreat from life that is still at the core of many countermodern stances; the second captures the spirit of true engagement with life that underlies the deepest criticisms of modernity.

Over the years, too many of the high Romantic syntheses of contrary realms have a bogus air, as Richard Chase used to argue, insisting that the Romantic American literary genius was at its terrifying, broken-hearted best in exploring the tensions and dialectics of contrary realms. I want to extend Chase's point to Romantic social thought, psychology, and education generally. Rousseau is at his psychological best when, instead of rendering an idyll out of Watteau, he shows growth as the result of a dialectic of conflict: between Emile and nature, and between Emile and his tutor. Love lies at the core of the child's life, but the key to development is conflict. Rousseau's pastorale, and those that have succeeded it, like Friedrich Froebel's nineteenth-century daydream of children's harmonious development, reveal some of the deepest weaknesses in this line of thought. No real childhood can ever be an idyll.

Today the heirs of Rousseau's foolishness are the sentimentalists and pop Freudians who have taken Freud's dark picture of development—his secular version of the sinful, tormented souls of religious tradition—and converted it into the simple idea that children can be made happy by an absence of restraint. Freedom is necessary for development; so, however, is conflict and grief and sadness. Adults can help, but no one can spare a child a successive series of inner crises which are inherent in anyone's relation to the world. To love at all is to risk loss, to know hatred and anger, and to learn sorrow.

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Consciousness is a good for Rousseau; it is not, however, the supreme good that it is for other high Romantics. He wants to damp down the desires the imagination prompts, to block out the lure of the past and the future in taking people away from experience in the present. His two educational goals—growth and inner peace—are the two contradictory impulses of the New Education. In spiritual terms, the contrast is between a nature that is abundant, and a nature that makes its home in stoical scarcity.

Although these ideals coexist in Rousseau's mind, fear that moderns will lose their way and themselves often triumphs; the Stoic defeats the high Romantic. In the end, what Rousseau wants for moderns most of all is surcease from change. This is why growth and consciousness of the sort admired by other high Romantics from Wordsworth and Keats to Dewey are not the bedrock of his position. It is why he is fundamentally a countermodern. In the end the rebel from Christianity sides with Augustine, rather than Pelagius. He seeks peace for ordinary people, because he despairs of human nature. This is why, at bottom, Rousseau can be profoundly totalitarian. Like the Grand Inquisitor and his twentieth-century heirs, he is tempted to enslave the human race out of pity for its weakness.

Long Revolution, Lost Community

There is another, related pair of themes in Rousseau's writing, which grow in importance as the long conversation on modernity reaches the twentieth century. They have to do with the nature of "progress." At the heart of the Enlightenment view of history lie two different versions of progress. Like John Locke, Voltaire and Condorcet contrasted modernity with the medieval era, when mankind wandered in the darkness of bigotry, superstition, and terror. Rousseau, on the other hand, begs to differ; he sees history as a process of decline, a decay of morals, civic virtue, naturalness, community.

There are two basic myths about modernity, and both derive in part at least from Rousseau. I call them the myth of the Long Revolution and the myth of Lost Community—using the word myth to indicate that these are ideological, as well as analytic concepts, organizing belief and action, as well as thought. The myth of the Long Revolution portrays modern Western history as a steady advance in the values of autonomy, equality, and rationality. This is the modernizing myth that has generally prevailed in America's booster past, a parable of progress. The myth of Lost Community, on the other hand, takes the form of a critique of the consequences of this very progress. Its central value is community, and it tells the story of the West since the Middle Ages (usually) as a tale of growing alienation, disenchantment, and anomie, a vast uprooting amounting to a human catastrophe. The Long Revolution applauds the sundering of old unities; the Lost Community perspective sees the splintered, broken modern world as a disaster, and the division of labor as the great source of mystification and alienation.

Proponents of the Long Revolution speak of gains in the standard of living, the development of science, the slow extension of the revolutionary ideals of liberty, equality, and fraternity into the realms of child-rearing and the family, and in recent years the evidence (in the advanced Western countries) of higher standards of child care, health, social services. Those who mourn the Lost Com-

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munity point to alienation, disenchantment, the collapse of authority, bureaucratization, and anomie—all the costs of progress.

The Long Revolution holds that the changes that have taken place are on balance progressive. Western society has evolved in the direction of greater scientific knowledge, technological knowledge, industrialization, greater political rights—and a good thing, too. Not only is this the traditional vantage point from which American middle class boosters have viewed history, but it is also the way most socialists and minorities have viewed it, their complaint being that the promises of the Long Revolution are yet to come. Both, however, continue to stress the promise of the Long Revolution.

The component parts of the Long Revolution perspective do not necessarily make up a tidy whole. Various figures working from its perspective are likely to stress one or another of its elements: science, industry, abundance, democracy, autonomy, equality. But this cluster of ideas and themes is a dialectical whole, a sum of conflicting ideas and images of modernity that have been part of the mental equipment of thoughtful Westerners since Condorcet and the other optimists of the eighteenth century interpreted history as a growing progress of Enlightenment and reason against the forces of obscurantism and reaction. The *philosophes* took very seriously the suggestion of rationalistic and empiricist science that man makes himself, although their formulations obscured some critical questions about autonomy. Rational men could change the social environment and bring about progress. The implications of this for politics and education seemed apparent and, indeed, the French Revolution proved to be decisive in stamping the Long Revolution with what looked, for a time, like a certificate of inevitability.

The fascinating thing about Rousseau is that he belongs both in the camp that stresses the gains of progress and the one that stresses its price. He is a rationalist and an egalitarian; an enemy of arbitrary authority, and a friend of human autonomy, he is a chief ideological source of the Long Revolution. And yet viewing the advent of modernity as a catastrophe and stressing the discontents generated by the advance of civilization, he is one of the most influential thinkers on Lost Community.

The two positions I am tracing derive in some measure from two views of human reason. At the starkest, they oppose reason as a value to community. Both revolutionary tradition and classical liberal thought have rested on an appeal to reason; antiliberal thought has stressed the limits of reason. The progress of civilization is a growth in some varieties of reason—science, the rational organization of society, individual reason—and yet Rousseau and the whole line of social critics who follow him are often critics of one-eyed rationality in the name of community, participation, sentiment, and the concrete. In Rousseau's complex position, the point of the process of education is to allow a free, autonomous man to put his passions in the service of his reason.

What Rousseau criticizes is the way that change, inequality, the division of labor in an unequal society, and the pathology of the restless imagination have all eroded the possibility of either decent family life or civic participation. In a sense Rousseau is anticipating a long line of social criticism that attacks the modern rational organization of society in the name of either individual rationality or community, or both. In another sense his thought links to the subsequent line that attacks the evils of industrial society in the name of a vision of a unified

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culture, the long protest against alienation that has contributed to the best and worst social thought of the last two centuries. The quest for "community" as against "society" is often a search for an ideal of "culture," as Raymond Williams has shown. It is one of the great themes of the nineteenth century. It can take either reactionary or progressive forms, depending on whether it seeks to overthrow the norm of individual rationality altogether or whether it seeks to combine reason with community in some form of high Romantic synthesis. The tradition has a good deal of strength; its critique of the rationalistic one-dimensional quality of bourgeois liberalism is well taken. Yet it is an unstable intellectual compound, with a continuing link between explicit—low Romantic—disavowals of rationality and reactionary politics. The attack on reason nearly always ends up as a denigration of the capacities of ordinary people, and therefore an attack on democracy. At one time it seemed quite clear that the party of reason was the progressives, while the party of miracle, mystery, and authority was the reactionaries. Yet as the history of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries unfolded, aspects of the defense of the old regime were from time to time detached from their reactionary settings. Just as Romanticism blended modernizing and countermodern arguments in a confusing way, so has socialism. Rousseau's divided mind prefigures the divisions within modernity that have made it increasingly difficult to sort politics out into categories of right and left. Thus the hostility to abstraction and the defense of communal values, nationality, populism, local government and political participation, roots, and face-to-face community are part of political beliefs that are now by no means clearly of the right or of the left. Some of the time the intent of criticisms of the Enlightenment ideals is still reactionary; at other times the intent is to introduce aspects of life ignored or denied by rational liberal tradition, not necessarily to discredit it. Thus the work of figures like Dewey and James in America represented an effort to honor science, yet to expand liberal values and tradition to include the Romantic emotional and communal emphases and values and perspectives that had mostly, in the nineteenth century, been the possession of the right. Similarly, with the ideal of an organic culture, which was in origin a line of elite criticism of industrial society resting on values of an idealized medieval culture. For a long time in the hands of critics from Arnold to Eliot this was a reactionary tradition: a minority socialist version of it, developed, however, from figures like Ruskin and Morris down to figures like Orwell and Raymond Williams. This takes the attack on industrial society and tries to make it a democratic socialist argument, not an elite criticism of mass society, although it often ends up making similar accusations.

The Enlightenment debate between Rousseau and the likes of Voltaire and Condorcet echoes throughout the vast literature on social progress, reform, families, children, child-rearing, and schools. It is a debate between the proponents of Long Revolution and their opponents: between the hopeful pedagogues, radicals, and reformers of the nineteenth century and their critics, between Richard Titmuss and Phillippe Ariès, between today's Piagetians and the followers of Claude Lévi-Straus.

Schools are part of the debate; so are child-centered modern families. They are symptoms of the world we have lost through modernization, or else gains won. For those mourning the old order, the nuclear family is a pathetic remnant of a richer social world or a sinister novelty; to proponents of the Long

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Revolution the child-centered families of recent decades are an index of rising affluence, leisure, mass consumption and changing standards of child care. Supporters of the Long Revolution point to the decline in infant mortality and the ravages of childbirth and to higher standards of health, housing, cleanliness, leisure. From the other point of view, children assembled in the state-run, age-graded, highly rationalized institutions we call schools are a perfect emblem of the loss of humanity in the bourgeois order—apt symbols of a rationalized society incapable of accepting diversity, death, old age, or mystery.

Thus since Rousseau, it is impossible to speak of policy about children and families without trying to cast some sort of balance sheet on the ills and benefits of modernity. He had an instinctive sense that the meaning of the family was changing in the eighteenth century and that men and women and children were going to stand in a different relationship to each other in the future. He was scarcely a woman's liberationist—Emile's bride, Sophy, is a ghastly parody, anticipating what has been called the nineteenth-century's cult of true womanhood, and his ideas about the new ideal family are distinctly patriarchal. Nonetheless it is not hard to see the implications for other members of the family in Rousseau's destruction of authority and his sense that the quest for equality and autonomy would henceforth be shared by everyone, in many different realms.

To some the new status of children and their freedom from economic necessity represents a triumph over the rigidities of scarcity. To others the essence of privatized modernity is that it cuts people off from nature and from the public realm of citizenship and participation. Rousseau was an egalitarian radical, but it is an interesting fact that his critique of modernity is a staple of reactionary discourse since the French Revolution. The opponents of the Revolution argued that the progress of bourgeois rights, rationality, and autonomy was a catastrophe substituting the reign of selfishness and rationalistic abstraction for the older bonds of community. This is a point of view that goes from reactionary figures like de Maistre and Bonald to Durkheim and such recent antibourgeois Romantic and countermodern theorists as Foucault and Ariès.

The long conversation has been in the main Romantic; a key debate is often between high and low versions of Romanticism. The appeal to the fullness of the imagination is a consistent high Romantic hope; it is often a hope for the imagination reinforced by reason: consciousness. Tolstoy, with his hatred of modernization and the rationalizations of Westernization is an interesting test case, for example: with his religion of life and his conviction of the essential mysteriousness of our lives, and his love of village Russia, he seems low Romantic; nonetheless, he wants to teach every peasant boy in the village to reason, to think for himself, not to rely on the priest. He is a rationalist, in the end a high Romantic, who opposes modernity and yet whose highest value is rational consciousness.

Rousseau is the first major thinker to argue that the pace of change and the psychological consequences of modern dividedness are enemies to inner peace and psychic wholeness. And, as Judith Shklar has pointed out, he holds out two possible and quite distinct utopian alternatives for moderns to behold—and possibly to act upon. One utopia rested on an ideal of individual autonomy, and it stresses the need for a countercultural education, private family life, and countermodern institutions to protect the individual from the modern world's empire of opinion, error, oppression, inequality, and greed. This private educative

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utopia is spelled out in *La Nouvelle Héloïse* and the *Emile,* the seminal statements of the private, countercultural, and therapeutic ideal. The other utopia is civic, political, and collective: it is to be found in works like the *Social Contract*, and its underlying image is that of the city-state, where the individual finds unity by merging himself with the civic unit—later the nation, the party, the movement. Both utopias rest on a basic critique of modernity that points to its corroding effects on the true authentic self, on the one hand; on civic participation and the community, on the other. Perhaps in that legendary time we now call the sixties many of us were haunted by Rousseau's public utopia. Now for the moment at least it tends to be the private, familial utopia that sings in our dreams and visions of public policy.

Rousseau's passion for equality and his suspicion that the progress of science and art will mean a human disaster sound the key themes of the long debate. There are others, to be sure: legitimate authority, true individuality, authenticity, the need for counterinstitutions to redress the imbalances of modernity. Rousseau helped make the great modern myths. It was he who gave fullest expression to the dream of secular happiness that has haunted the world ever since his time. He is central, too, for the way he begins the quest for nature and a new countermodern social ideal that somehow marries nature and artifice.

Rousseau the egalitarian speaks on behalf of the Long Revolution; Rousseau the critic of progress is the theorist of Lost Community. In the nineteenth century, the two themes appeared in the alternations of hope and despair as people confronted modernization. Think of the tremendously mixed American feelings over what the forces of capitalist modernization and technology were doing to the landscape and, even more, the American character. The underlying question Rousseau posed—the issue of nature and civilization—was bound to be especially urgent in a society that was a product of a political revolution as well as being launched on the conquest of a wild continent. Rousseau thus speaks directly to the painful experience of the nation that was at once the most Romantic of Western countries and imbued with a frenzy of material progress.

An interesting thing about the rival myths of Lost Community and Long Revolution is the way they can coexist and overlap in one mind, like geological strata. Even in classical liberal thought, a close look reveals a certain ambivalence. Under the dominant boosterism of capitalist modernization in the nineteenth century there runs a consistent thread of worry over the fate of older communal and republican values in the new industrial order. In actual practice the capitalist modernizers of America's Long Revolution counted on a host of countermodern institutions—the family, notably, along with schools—to act as communal counterweights to the anarchy and ruthlessness of the capitalist economy. The worried middle classes promoted the Long Revolution, but they wanted institutions like families and schools to replace the elements of Lost Community that economic and technological change were destroying. So, in somewhat different terms, ran the thinking of the working classes, who have fought a long struggle for stable family life against the ravages of capitalist industrialization.

As a manual of self-conscious countermodernization, the *Emile* amounts to an inquiry into whether it is possible to institutionalize the natural, to create settings that evoke the spontaneous and the natural. In the dawning world of factories, bureaucracies, and cities, most of the thinkers in Rousseau's line be-

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lieve that there might be a way by which conscious thought and policy—social invention—can recreate some of the qualities of natural and informal modes of human association and learning. Thinkers in Rousseau's line keep returning to three images of human education: mothers and babies, the round of pre-industrial village life, and the artisan workshop. This is one of the baffling keys to the story. Modernity arrived in the West proclaiming a return to nature. It was the appeal to nature and basic human nature, the recovery of nakedness, that ended by sweeping away tradition, the older roles, patriarchal forms of authority, the ancient hierarchies of privilege. Yet one of the manifold paradoxes entwined around the idea of the "natural" is the fact that the appeal to nature quickly turns into an attempt to fashion new men and women through politics or education. Romantic naturalism, paradoxically, nearly always ends up as a form of social engineering. The nature of human nature is a key point in the debate, but natural man has to be fashioned by human artifice out of the wreckage of existing society. Rousseau illuminates the essentially political character of all the debates on modernity, education, and the family, although he said little enough about what the nineteenth century called "the social issue" and was basically a psychologist, not a class theorist.

Rousseau's successors disagree with him on many points, but each is engaged in a version of Rousseau's effort to restore on a higher, more conscious plane, natural states of unity and oneness with oneself, other men, and nature. Rousseau wants a civilized savage, and so, in varying blends of culture and wildness, do other thinkers in the tradition. The goal is to set up a middle landscape, halfway between savage nature and a corrupt and overrefined society, to modernize in some realms and yet to protect others from the extremes of modernization. In education and in politics, the tradition is a pastoral one. Romanticism, we see, is not at all a purely literary phenomenon; it is part and parcel of philosophical tradition and our traditions of social thought too.

The richest storehouse of these themes on education and modernity is, of course, that child-centered strand of thought we call the New Education. From Pestalozzi and Froebel to John Dewey, this is a line of thought that tries in a high Romantic fashion to blend the legacy of the Age of Reason with Romanticism. It is a set of arguments about modernity's implications for families and child-rearing, not just schools. The quest for a new education is an institutional expression of the search for the high Romantic synthesis: for learning settings that would offer an interplay of head and heart, science and sentiment, authority and freedom, civilization and nature, the concrete and the abstract—that would strike a dynamic balance between the claims of the self and community, and of the past, present, and future. Rousseau's familial utopia becomes part of the countermodern attack on industrial capitalist society in the name of a vision of a unified culture and a unitary consciousness.

No institutions could accomplish all that Rousseau and his heirs wanted families and education to do. Sentimentality is not just a surface aspect of the tradition, but points to some of its craziest misconceptions. Yet the good side of the utopianism is also plain; in asking whether there were alternatives to the modes of modernization that prevailed in the West, the thinkers in Rousseau's line were raising critical issues. Defending utopian thought, Martin Buber once pointed out that socialist tradition has yet to arrive at an adequate portrait of human nature and human possibility. I agree. In looking for a balance of mod-

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ern and countermodern the utopians in Rousseau's line struggle toward a more complex portrait of people, their possibilities, and their needs. They protest the brutal simplicities, the unilinearity and determinism of the great cruel myths of modernization, the rival lies of loss and progress. They ask us to make critical choices and to act, not to let History dictate human fate. They are often misled as to the margins for maneuvering of such institutions as families and schools, but they raise fundamental issues: alternative possibilities, the meaning and purpose of life and death, the forms the religious impulse might take in a secular world.

An interesting instance of Rousseau's centrality in the long debate on modernity appears if we glance at the two great theorists of American modernization, Thorstein Veblen and John Dewey. Members of the intellectual generation we loosely call the Progressives, on the surface they were modernizers, committed to science, and in many respects in rebellion against the dimwitted excesses of American low Romantic intellectual tradition. They were trying to work out a high Romantic mediation of reason and feeling, and the central tension in all their thought—between the values of face-to-face community, on the one hand, and the value of science, on the other—turns out on closer inspection to be yet another version of the themes of Long Revolution and Lost Community. So they too are a blend of modernizing and countermodern elements.

The line of argument that runs from Progressive social theorists to a figure like David Riesman involves some of Rousseau's important themes, notably the issues of equality, Romanticism, and the proper relationship of science to community. Not being eighteenth-century minds, the Progressives and their successors in American social thought have tended to emphasize economics and technology, yet they have been "soft" technological determinists in a way that maintains and updates Rousseau's fascination with the potential—benign and pathological—of human autonomy. All of the American social thinkers veer back and forth between the proposition that man makes his fate and the notion that in some sense the material environment makes man. Veblen, above all, made direct use of Rousseau's questionable old device, philosophical anthropology, to work out a historical version of Rousseau's parable of lost social innocence. In Veblen's version of the parable, the "advance" of society from peaceful and cooperative "savagery" to militant, competitive barbarism was, of course, a lapse, a fall from primitive grace. Veblen's savages are direct high Romantic descendants of Rousseau's. Veblen's analysis of modernity as a kind of barbarism plays off the images of savagery and barbarism in a way that directly echoes Rousseau, and his use of this imaginary anthropological history has a similar purpose: to argue that at bottom human nature is cooperative, rational, decent, and good, even though modern society has systematically warped the life-giving impulses. Casting one's social analysis as a contrast between Death and Life—which is the basic mythology of Progressive radicals like Veblen and Dewey—is of course a way of proclaiming oneself a Romantic, which, indeed, is the buried truth about the great American Progressives for all their reverence for science.

How the fall occurred is not entirely clear from Veblen's parables. It seems as though the basic, core instinct Veblen called "workmanship" and the material

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circumstances of early human culture somehow combined to create situations where those whose work did not meet a new standard of efficiency suffered a lack of status. What emerged out of this corruption of healthy instinct was a false social standard: the difference between cooperative savagery and hateful barbarism being in some Rousseauan sense a matter of sincerity and integrity. In the shift to barbarism, visible success rather than true efficiency—status rather than impersonal achievement in the realm of things—became the criterion, and thenceforth the main point of human striving became the scrabble for the signs and seals of human approval, rather than the life-enhancing standard of impersonal service to the group. Advanced primitive cultures already showed the seeds of the emulative and invidious barbaric order which (in Veblen's peculiar panorama of world history) stretched into the era of late capitalism. Two conditions were, however, necessary for the true horrors of barbarism to emerge out of peaceful savagery. Rousseau would have recognized them both: frequent change, and the exposure of people to a shared, yet shifting and fragmented human environment whose approval was crucial for status and self-esteem.

Thus the basic parable is in fact Rousseau's: from the discipline and relative harmony of a social community shaped by the impersonal demands of nature and the natural order, Veblen shifts to a modernizing world resting on the sand of human approval, the barbaric and man-made misery of fraud, chicanery, and invidious distinction. The key for Veblen, as it later was for David Riesman, was endless change. Economic and technological change kept confronting people with novel situations, and the situations themselves became more and more questions of human contacts, as the arena of striving shifted from nature to other people. The spread of the division of labor, the increasing variety of social roles people learned about, the spread of leisure, the growth in knowledge of other societies and cultures all tilted people toward a greater capacity for imagining themselves in somebody else's shoes. Empathy, social sympathy, grew—people in increasingly egalitarian societies could no longer stomach public executions—but so, as Rousseau put it in his earlier diagnosis of the psychic costs of change, the division of labor, and modernization, did the danger of acquiring a "false sentiment of being." By Riesman's day, emulation could somewhat more plausibly be divorced from outright violent exploitation, although *The Lonely Crowd* was never trenchant when it came to issues of power and inequality in realms other than psychology. For Veblen, all forms of emulation, consumption, and display were evidence of an ability to live without working, badges of a capacity to exploit other people. John Dewey agreed, saying the Veblenian distinction between the barbaric values of modern business and the good values of "industry"—all that impersonally advanced the life-giving material requirements of the community—were central to his own thought. Dewey's critique of classical Greek philosophy, after all, was essentially a Veblenian social analysis of the defects of a point of view about the world that denigrated working with your hands. It could at times be an outrageous exercise in debunking; but it also pointed to real defects in a slave culture afflicted with the barbarian and aristocratic graces. Veblen and Dewey were both frequently wobbly on the question of power, too, but they remained convinced that all forms of consumption linked to exploitation: however subdued, the regime of business was

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barbaric. Riesman, responding to a later and more subdued—a "social"—capitalism, was struggling, not entirely successfully, to dispense with the older metaphors of power and inequality.

The Progressives were prophets of technology, but they were also Romantic Rousseauan prophets of a revival of face-to-face community. A common procedure for all of them, as they shed their idealist skins, was to take the old idealist Absolute and assign its general characteristics to those of an ideal organic community. Rightly ordered, the new scientific and industrial order would be a series of small communities linked by modern communications and supported by the abundance made possible by modern industry. Late industrialism was reassembling a world order that revived the qualities of earlier community life. The tradition keeps confronting one of Rousseau's basic problems, the proper relationship of reason and science to the realms of feeling and community, and thus, in ways we must begin to see more clearly, it is profoundly Romantic—high Romantic—in outlook. It also constantly shows both the strengths and weaknesses of the Rousseauan response to modernity in that it is essentially a psychological and moral stance, with a weak grasp of economic structure and a tendency to psychologize politics.

In Russia in the twentieth century and in America in the late nineteenth, the great cultural battle was won initially by the modernizers. In John Dewey's time the fight was still going on, however; in certain respects the American Progressives were our Bolsheviks, out to uproot tradition and put science and efficiency in its place. Like the Bolsheviks, they opposed the cluster of traditional traits the Russians called Oblomovism; they wanted to rationalize conduct, control feeling, and instill discipline. Figures like Veblen and Dewey were a little afraid of idleness and luxury, "conspicuous consumption," and they did not want emotions to get in the way of objectivity. The Progressive emphasis on action as against the stifled subjectivity of both late Romanticism and nineteenth-century evangelicalism reflected the modernizing push for autonomy and production.

Yet by John Dewey's day, Progressives' feelings about modernization got much more mixed. There was a revulsion against the loneliness and solipsism of the regime of inner direction, a tendency to ask about the uses to which the new abundance should be put, and a new, insistent query as to what the point of science, efficiency, economics, and technique should be. There was a new interest in the uses of institutions and traditions. In a host of realms there was, in fact, a revival of Rousseau's Romantic protests against modernity; the women's movement, the literature of protest, the assault on the restraints of Victorian culture and the patriarchal mode of authority, the new aestheticism, cultural modernism itself were all expressions of new cultural modernisms and communalisms that combined Rousseau's modern and countermodern themes. In many respects the new twentieth-century intellectual currents reflected the importance of consumption in the new order; underlying many of the new ideas of the Progressive cultural radicals at the turn of the century was an interest in expressiveness and feelings to counterbalance the older emphasis on rationality, efficiency, and production. The wave of Progressive social criticism Christopher Lasch calls the New Radicalism was, among other things, a neo-Romantic assault on what capitalist modernization had done, protesting the costs of ratio-

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nality, the rigid character shaped by competition, the need to expend human life and energy on mainly economic goals. The old assault on the passivity of work and culture continued; only the new mood of the Progressive cultural radicals reflected a new taste for democracy and participation and play. Hence their fascination with child-rearing, schools, play, and their attempts to rework the high Romantic synthesis of reason and feeling on a new, modest, empirical basis.

What was first a criticism of industrial capitalism became, in time, a critique of industrial, bureaucratic society. It was true enough, as apologists for modernity explained, that the progressive differentiation of society made for more choice, especially among the middle class. It was also true, as many critics pointed out, that the supposedly rational capitalist order still rested on the exploitation of the workers: it was isolated, fragmented, lacking in feeling, in community. Critics and apologists alike tried for a balance of modern and countermodern elements so that neither impulse nor rationality should dominate the whole of personal or social life. Almost everyone in the American version of the debate assumed, unlike Rousseau in his gloomiest moments, that a suitable blend of the modern and countermodern was in fact possible. The differences lay in what sort of blend each figure sought.

The underlying quarrel between the Long Revolution and the Lost Community perspectives is an argument about change, as well as the place of reason. The proponents of the Long Revolution tend to argue that change can be good, that human nature is sturdy enough to triumph over the losses that change inevitably brings; although the norm is, in part, rationality, high Romantic figures in the Long Revolution line argue that the revolution itself needs countering against its rationalistic excesses; their ideal remains a norm of consciousness that is, as John Dewey was to make quite explicit, tied to a neo-Romantic ideal of human development as never-ending growth, which means, of course, never-ending change. The most thoughtful of the modernizing yet countermodern theorists have held to Keats' high Romantic, tragic, recognition of loss as they continue, with Keats, to celebrate the capacity of the mind to grow and change. The Lost Community vein of thought in the end follows Rousseau; it is opposed to all change, it does not believe the human heart can withstand the buffetings of modernization, and its highest ideal is not consciousness, but inner peace, an end to turmoil, perhaps in another life.

In its images of childhood and art and the psychology of renewal—in its essential myth of life against death—the line of argument Rousseau begins counterpoises a complex high Romantic view of human growth and development to the death-dealing excesses of modernizing regimes in both capitalist and socialist countries. From Rousseau to Dewey the argument gropes for norms of community and human growth by which to judge the consequences of economic growth. The strengths in the tradition lie in its continual emphasis on the fact that the proper conditions for human development are the key issue; its weaknesses reflect its habit of repeating Rousseau's old mistake of psychologizing issues that are, at bottom, political and economic.

Rousseau is, then, a central man for the debate on modernity. In all his doubleness, deviousness, and rich ambiguity, Rousseau introduces us especially to three central themes: the meaning of modernization and "progress," the quest

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for a dynamic high Romantic mediation of reason and feeling as an ideal of growth as opposed to the low Romantic denigration of growth and change in favor of inner peace, and the search for a countermodern way consciously to institutionalize the natural in politics, family life, and education. In all these realms, Rousseau is the despairing pathologist of modernity, and his blend of gloom and hope, cynicism and faith, is perhaps the best introduction to our conversation, the extended dialogue on how to modernize and yet recreate essential elements of the premodern or—quite a different matter—the countermodern.

The literature on modernization is usually thought to begin with Marx. The literature on that countermodern cultural movement we call, oddly enough, "modernism" usually begins with the great antibourgeois and Romantic writers of the 1840s, figures like Flaubert and Dostoyevsky. Perhaps now it is time to see that modernism is in itself a second flood of the Romantic tide. We need to realize that the dialectic between cultural modernism and modernization, so central to the twentieth century, is in the end a version of the quarrels between the Enlightenment and its critics, among whom Rousseau stands supreme. To confront ourselves, we need to encounter Rousseau.

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BENJAMIN I. SCHWARTZ

The Rousseau Strain in the Contemporary World

> I remember having been struck in my childhood by a rather simple spectacle and yet a spectacle whose impression has remained with me ever since in spite of the vicissitudes of time and the diversity of experience. The St. Gervais Regiment had completed its exercise and had dined together in companies as was its custom. Most of the men who made up the Regiment gathered after supper in the Place de St. Gervais and began dancing together—officers and men—around the fountain on the basin of which stood the drummers, fifers, and torchbearers . . . It was late, the women had gone to bed; they all got up again. The wives went to join their husbands, the servant girls brought wine . . . Even the childen awakened by the noise ran down half-dressed to join their mothers and fathers . . . From all this there resulted a general feeling of mutual tenderness [*attendrissement*] which I really can't describe but a feeling which, in its general gaiety, one experiences quite naturally in the midst of all that which is dearest to us. My father, embracing me, was suddenly seized by a fit of trembling which I can still feel and share. "Jean-Jacques," He said, "love your country. Do you see these good Genevans; they're all friends, all brothers; joy and harmony dwells among them. You are a Genevan; you will see other people some day but when you will have traveled as much as your father you will never find their like.
>
> *Lettre à d'Alembert*

FEW WOULD DENY that one of the central strains in that complex of strains which we call modernity is what might be called the technological or engineering approach to the human condition. The notion that the crucial problems of man can be solved in large part by redesigning the machinery of the social-economic-political order was, of course, to become a central theme of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment, although it already had its illustrious predecessors in Bacon, Hobbes, and others. As the textbooks point out, this tendency was much encouraged by the Cartesian-Newtonian mechanical model of nature. Just as the Newtonian method provided the promise of infinite advance in material technology, so would its application to the "second nature" of human society prove equally successful in the realm of social technology. Indeed, a proper design of the social machine would itself foster an accelerated advance of material technology. To be sure, the implicit realization that many of the problems of complex societies are problems of social technology is certainly as old as the history of the higher civilizations. From the days of Sumer, Egypt, and the Shang dynasty, mankind has produced an abundance of "social engineers" who have wrestled with problems of bureaucratic administration and military organization, financial and fiscal policies, urban organization, and so forth. What is

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new is that the engineering paradigm now becomes a highly conscious, central paradigm. There is the growing conviction that the only *real* problems of men are precisely those amenable to an engineering approach.

The Cartesian model when applied to material technology is, of course, clear and unambiguous. The technologist is the embodiment of the intellect—the "cogito"—and the world of extended matter supplies the raw material. When the model is applied to the second nature of society, matters become more puzzling. The raw material of society is human beings, and human beings are presumably *all* combinations of matter and intellect. Where then is the engineer and where is his material? The answer which seems to emerge (and it is an answer which has survived in modified forms into the contemporary world) is that the bulk of mankind belongs to the realm of matter. The sensationalist psychology provides the model of a passive individual with the simplest needs completely shaped by his material and social environment. Just as the engineer requires raw materials of simple, predictable properties appropriate to his purpose, so does the engineering approach to the human condition require a drastically simplified and predictable model of man (or of most men). The model which emerges is one which stresses man's need for security and the satisfaction of his physical needs—the maximization of pleasure and minimization of pain. With this model the strange moralist view of the individual as a creature torn between the realms of what he "ought" to be and what he actually is simply disappears from view. The human unit is what he is, and the social engineer is able to work with his material as he finds it. The question remains, however: who is then the embodiment of intellect? The answer seems to be that there is a vanguard group of human society which, by dint of its preternatural scientific intelligence, seems to embody the Cartesian cogito. These are the "educators" and "legislators" who are somehow capable of transcending their social environment. "Legislator" within this context signifies what we would call experts or social engineers. One might well ask whether the engineering analogy should be applied to those tendencies of eighteenth-century thought which culminate in classical economics. It may be urged that the economists call not for an active manipulation of the social machine, but for a removal of impediments to the free operation of what is conceived of as a kind of self-running "natural" machine. Yet the fact is that the economists were themselves concerned with the construction of a proper legal-political environment within which the forces of liberated economy could find free vent. Engineers themselves, after all, are not simply potters who fashion inert clay, but people who know how to harness the dynamic laws governing the forces of nature. The liberated financiers, bankers, and manufacturers would themselves be the technicians of the new society.

One must, of course, not oversimplify the relationship of this engineering approach to other tendencies in eighteenth-century European society. One is thus struck by the quite different cultural contexts provided by French and Anglo-American societies. In his attack on the progress of the arts and sciences in his *Second Discourse*, Rousseau uses the word "art" not only in its broader ancient sense of the practical arts but also in its modern aesthetic sense. Voltaire, the encyclopedists and others who were in Rousseau's view the representatives of what I here call the engineering approach were, on the whole, also quite passionately devoted to the cultivation of the fine arts and belles lettres.

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Their conception of pleasure, while it may have included the grosser pleasures, also included the refined appreciation of the visual arts and of poetry, belles lettres, and the theater. They remained the heirs of the aristocratic literary culture of the seventeenth century. Their brilliant and witty conversations in aristocratic salons drew heavily on literary allusions as well as on scientific erudition, thus illustrating Rousseau's assertion that "the sciences, letters and arts . . . spread garlands of flowers over the iron chains with which men are burdened." It is not only that in his view the sciences and arts embellished and thus obscured the ugly reality in which men were morally sundered from each other, but that the arts were part of the problem. They helped to divert the rich and powerful while confirming them in their illusions of superiority. The *philosophes* themselves used them to project their own egos, thus blocking off any sincere, transparent (to use Starobinski's term[1]) relationship with other men. The aesthetic values of this aristocratic culture were part of that overdifferentiated realm of the arts and sciences which not only underlay the sharp social cleavages of society but drew men away from the moral sources of their beings.

If we grant at least a certain validity to Max Weber's "Protestant Ethic" thesis as it applies to the Anglo-American world, we become aware that in that world the emerging technological approach to society was not necessarily as drastically disassociated from "virtue" as it appeared to Rousseau. Although Rousseau's own origins were in the artisanal class of Protestant Geneva, the argument that the sober Protestant virtues would themselves propel the advance of sciences and the practical arts is nowhere to be found in his writings. If confronted with it, he would no doubt have pointed to the paradoxical aspects of this notion pointed out by Weber himself. If the logical outcome of technological progress is the consumer society and the exaltation of comforts and luxury, how long could the sober and austere Protestant virtue survive? Yet the fact remains that even in contemporary America, however much Protestant theological foundations may have crumbled, the uninhibited pursuit of engineering solutions (whether these be economic, sociological, or psychological) to human problems has still not entirely lost its association with a kind of moral earnestness, at least on the part of the engineers themselves.

It would, of course, be quite wrong to say that this engineering approach, even in its French context, was not concerned with ethical ends. After all, the entire purpose of the legislator-engineer is to promote the welfare of mankind. Many of the encyclopedists shared Rousseau's devotion to liberty and equality as ultimate goals which would be an inevitable outcome of a well-designed society. Material progress would assure abundance. A well-designed polity would assure peace and security. Under such circumstances it would be easy to bring about the equal distribution of goods and services and to make it possible for individuals to pursue happiness in their own ways. As a utilitarian ethic of outcomes, the approach could, however, totally bypass the moralistic obsession with a morality of motivations, with the preoccupation with "being good." The means for achieving the desired ends are technicoscientific and the language in which they are discussed is the language of technical discourse, with its often cool, detached, and complacent pathos. This bears little resemblance to the pathos of anxiety and indignation, doubt and exaltation so often associated with moral discourse.

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In its Enlightenment phase, the engineering strain was of course, often marked by a deep sense of exasperation with the past history of mankind with its stupid distortions of man's true priorities. The energies of mankind had been diverted for ages by the extravagances of religion, myth, and superstition, by the futilities of speculative philosophy and other such follies from the pursuit of a felicity or at least a comparative well-being which might have been achieved by a systematic attention to material and social technology. In spite of this sense of exasperation, however, when we examine the writings of men such as Voltaire, Turgot, and Condorcet, we find that their condemnation of the history of mankind tends to be not as totalistic as that of Rousseau (who, of course, also made exceptions for Sparta, Rome, Geneva, and other models of civic virtue). The brighter side of the human story is to be discerned precisely in that slow but cumulative progress of the sciences and arts which in Rousseau's view was the fountainhead of evil. Looking to the future, when the progress of the sciences and arts might become the mainstream of historic development, one might anticipate a course of history which would finally dispense with the pathos of tears and anger.

Whatever the relations of the engineering approach to the ethical, when we turn to Rousseau we are immediately struck by the truth of Burke's observation that Rousseau is nothing if not a moralist. This was obvious to Burke even though he no doubt fully shared Samuel Johnson's belief that Rousseau was a thoroughly bad man and his morality a thoroughly perverse morality. In referring to him as a moralist, one points to a qualitative difference between his moralism and the utilitarian ethic of those whom he attacked as representatives of what has here been called the engineering approach. Morality does not refer in the first instance to desirable social outcomes which may ensue from technical means which are themselves morally neutral. It refers to the immediate moral quality of human beings and to the quality of the relationships among them. "Virtuous" motives are crucial, not only because good social results can in the end only be achieved in a society of virtuous human beings, but also because what is most crucial to the achievement of social happiness is the immediate moral quality of human beings (and in Rousseau's morality of sentiments, this quality manifests itself in the pure and "transparent" sentiments of human beings in their immediate relationships). Liberty and equality as he conceived of them are not ends in themselves but means to the creation of a society based on virtuous binding sentiments. It has often been pointed out that he did not entirely negate the sciences and arts and was willing to accommodate them to the extent that they might be compatible with a moralized society. In the end, however, it is the moral quality of the individual and his society which is central to the human condition.

It should, however, immediately be added that there is every reason to consider Rousseau a man of the Enlightenment and to speak of his morality as a modern morality. In spite of the real and profound differences which divide him from his opponents among the *philosophes,* in spite of the large gulf which divides the entire Rousseau strain of modern thought from the technological strain, there are, as I hope to indicate, shared premises which justify us in subsuming both strains under the category of modernity.

To be sure, in his preoccupation with the moral dimension, Rousseau is in some sense more traditional than his opponents. A moral diagnosis of the hu-

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man condition was perhaps closer not only to the mainstream of Western tradition but also to the central traditions of the great non-Western civilizations. Even when we look to the content of his morality, we find that his catalogue of vices corresponds closely to images of moral evil not only in the Judeo-Christian West, but in non-Western civilizations as well. When one studies the moral orientations of non-Western civilizations, one ultimately finds that however much the moral systems of these civilizations may differ in their positive commitments, they tend to be in astounding agreement concerning the manifestations of moral evil. Greed, pride, vanity, the desire for ascendancy and fame, uncontrolled sensual passions, calculating ambition—all of these would be readily recognized as vices by Buddhists and Confucianists as well as by the mainstream of Western "traditional" ethics. These traditions may have quite divergent views of the degree of tolerance to be accorded to the self-regarding impulses, but in general the aggressive assertion of the ego is negated. From this point of view, the legitimation of self-interest, of ambition, of love of material goods, and so forth, which we find in the newly emerging engineering approach marks a more radical break with traditional views of vice than anything we find in Rousseau. Rousseau was indeed quite conscious of this, as when in his attack on Melon (a French disciple of Mandeville) for his legitimation of luxury he states, "It is true that until now luxury, while often prevalent, has been regarded by the world as the fatal source of an infinity of evils. It was reserved for Melon first to publicize this poisonous doctrine whose novelty will acquire for him more sectaries than the solidity of his reasons."[2] Whereas Rousseau may be the father of modern social and political radicalism, it is his technocratic opponents who seem to be the more drastic transformers of values.

What then are the features which mark Rousseau as a man of the Enlightenment and which justify the claim that his morality is a modern morality? There is, first of all, his assertion that "tout tient à la politique" and his lifelong reiteration that the moral question and the political question are indissolubly linked. The word "political" as used by Rousseau tends to embrace the whole of what we would call the sociopolitical order. What is involved is the assertion that the *behavior* of the vast majority of men (leaving aside the superhuman educators and legislators) is determined by their sociopolitical environment. To be sure, Rousseau's "natural man" is not Locke's tabula rasa, even though he accepted a good deal of the prevailing sensationalist psychology. On the surface, natural man is a simple and harmless creature with limited instinctual needs. In fact, however, this "natural man" enjoys a plentitude of being. Not only does he contain *in potentia* all the capacities which will emerge when he enters social life—both the capacities for the corruptions of an evil, unequal society and the capacities for higher social virtue—but even in a state of nature he possesses a profound sense of his own existence. That innocence at the core of his being already marks him as a moral being. In his later years, when Rousseau will take flight from an evil society to the solitude of an isolated existence, he will in his own mind return to that essential core of his being as a natural man. In the words of Starobinski, "In order to depict the original constitution of man it is to his own heart that he turns. He does not doubt that he is himself a 'natural man' or at least a man in whom the memory of nature has not been effaced."[3]

Yet we are struck by the fact that while Rousseau's natural man is not a flat surface, he is essentially as passive in relationship to his social environment as

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the model of a man in the engineering approach. One of the accepted clichés concerning the nature of the modern age is that, for the first time, man is now confident of his ability to control his own destiny. Much depends, however, on what is the referent of the simple little word "man." If one is referring to the average individual, one is rather struck by the ascendancy of the notion of social determination. In Rousseau's case, he both deeply believes in man's essential innocence and in his incapacity to actualize his innocence in society. His own "Confessions" demonstrate the radical disjuncture between his inner innocence and his actual behavior, which reflected all the corruptions of a corrupt society. The innocence of his untroubled childhood reflected the wholesome social milieu of the artisan class in his native Geneva. His later misadventures in Savoy and France reflected the seductions of an evil society.

Although natural man may have had all the potentialities for the corruptions which arose when men became dependent on other men for the satisfaction of their newly created artificial needs, it is absolutely crucial for Rousseau to believe that the cause of this fall is external. "I assume for the sake of argument," he states in the *Social Contract*, "that a point was reached in the history of mankind when the obstacles to continuing in a state of nature were stronger than the forces which each individual could employ to the end of continuing in it."[4] The original fall into a corrupt civilization was caused by external forces of nature, the achievement of a virtuous society can also come only from "outside," through the "superior intelligence" and godlike charisma of great legislators. Having been misshapen by a vicious social environment, the people "does not know what it wants because only rarely does it know what is for its own good."[5] Rousseau thus completely shares with his protagonists the belief in sociopolitical determinism and in the need for transcendant legislators and educators. As is true of his contemporaries, his mind is preoccupied not only with the relationship between the individual human mind and the world of nature but above all with the role of the "second nature" of the social, economic, and political world. Yet the conception of social environment and of the nature of legislators is markedly different in both cases. To the protagonists of the engineering approach, the passive human material made up of units composed of simple, calculable properties can be recombined into new, more effective social structures by legislators who are essentially social engineers. The environment is a material to be restructured. To Rousseau, the evil sociopolitical environment is—to use Starobinski's image—the "obstacle" which blocks human beings off from each other and prevents them from relating to each other as transparent, innocent beings. In some sense, Rousseau's legislator is also an engineer, but one whose task is in the first instance that of demolition. "People incessantly mended," we read in the *Second Discourse*, "whereas it would have been necessary to begin by clearing the area and setting aside all the old materials as Lycurgus did in Sparta in order to raise a good edifice afterwards."[6] The engineering image is further suggested by the language of the *Social Contract* when it stresses that the legislator must in a sense "denature" man. He "sets himself to change, as it were, the very stuff of human nature."[7] Yet, the qualifier "as it were" is very important here. The fundamental constitution which the legislator ordains creates an environment in which it becomes possible for the core of natural goodness already present in all men to rise to the level of social virtue. Furthermore, the great

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legislator does not merely ordain laws. He communicates to the people something of his own greatness of soul. The public celebration in the Place de St. Gervais depicted in the passage cited as the epigraph to this article, with its mingled sentiments of martial comradeship, civic patriotism, and mutual tenderness seems highly spontaneous and natural. Yet it would not have been possible if Geneva had not received a noble constitution created long before by Calvin and others.[8] It was the constitution itself which made possible this effusive, seemingly spontaneous expression of the general will.

In a real sense, Rousseau is much more profoundly political than his opponents. It is not only that the highest moral potentialities of man can only be actualized by political means, but that his highest vision of human felicity is based on the image of "public happiness" which presupposes the "antique" ideal of political life. Rousseau's "individualistic" retreat into himself may provide him with a satisfactory refuge from an intolerable society, but it does not represent his summum bonum. The evils of a bad society may be mitigated by an escape into domestic bliss, as in *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, or by the ideal education of an individual, as in the *Emile*, but in the end the evil "obstacle" can be eliminated—if at all—only by a total sociopolitical transformation, and the virtue of a good society could only be a political-communal virtue. Lycurgus in Sparta and the Roman leaders after the Tarquins were able to transform their societies totally because of a discontinuity created by a period of violence and civic strife.[9] The engineering approach, on the other hand, seemed committed to using political means to achieve nonpolitical ends of private happiness. What is more, the engineering metaphor encouraged the belief in piecemeal reconstruction, the belief that one could utilize parts of the present order to promote a better order. It was, in fact, the adherents of this approach who believed that one might use the institution of absolute monarchy as an instrument of enlightened despotism. The *philosophes* might, after all, persuade the monarchs that the reforms suggested by them were in their own best interests as well as in the interest of the society as a whole. However different these visions of society may be, what is shared is a common disbelief in the power of the average man to shape his own life destiny and the common belief in the overwhelming power of the sociopolitical environment.

At a deeper philosophic level, Rousseau is surely a man of the Enlightenment in his post-Cartesian anthropocentrism. In spite of his supposed religiosity, his gaze is fixed on man and his society. He is profoundly skeptical of philosophical and theological efforts to discern ultimate meaning in the nonhuman cosmos, and his certainties are subjective certainties. His own version of the "cogito" might read "I feel therefore I am," but the certitude of his sentiment of innate goodness is firmly rooted in his subjectivity. The great legislator, of course, embodies not only the certitude of feeling but also the certitude of an innate rationality.

When Rousseau speaks of religion, we are constantly aware that he is speaking of the affective side of religion and of the effects of religious feelings on man's individual and social life. In dealing with the role of traditional religion in the body politic he is as crudely pragmatic as Voltaire. The great legislators, we learn, attribute "to the Gods a wisdom that was really their own in order that the people . . . might freely obey and might bear with docility the yoke of

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public happiness."[10] At a deeper level, however, his true "civil religion" involves the concentration of religious sentiment onto the sociopolitical entity known as *la patrie* (or perhaps more accurately, *la peuple-patrie*). It is in this sense that Rousseau is the authentic father of nationalism as a religion. Indeed he is the father of all modern societal religions which direct religious sentiment toward some human collectivity and away from the notion of a meaningful cosmos.

When we turn to the more individualistic religiosity of the *sentiment de la nature*, there may, to be sure, be some justification for speaking of a kind of nature mysticism. Yet at bottom, if religious sentiment in politics is the emotional cement of the general will, in the life of an isolated Rousseau turned in onto his own inner self, the beauties of the natural setting serve the function of enhancing his own "sentiment of existence." He had an infinitely more vivid sense than his opponents of the emotional needs served by religious sentiments, and he may indeed be the patron saint of all those in the modern world who define religion in terms of subjective states of consciousness, but in all of this he remains firmly embedded in the anthropocentric orientation of his contemporaries.

It may, of course, be urged that while all of this establishes Rousseau as a man of the Enlightenment, it does not establish the modernity—the contemporaneity—of his outlook. Leaving aside the distortions of a book like *Heavenly City*, in which Carl Becker sees an absolute opposition between the Enlightenment and his own view of modernity, there are those who would very much emphasize the transformations brought about by nineteenth- and twentieth-century thought in their definitions of the modernity. Although eighteenth-century thought may turn our attention to the "second nature" of social, economic, cultural, and political structures, it tends to treat these structures as inert artifacts. Institutions and social structures may have an enormous power to shape the lives of men, just as the laws of Newtonian physics control the movements of matter, but they do not possess any inner dynamic of change. The sociopolitical order may be brought about by external cataclysms of nature or, in Rousseau's account, by the deus ex machina of the teacher or legislator. As "sociological" a thinker as Montesquieu states that "when societies first come to birth it is the leaders who produce the institutions. Later, it is the institutions which produce the leaders." The historicist and evolutionary thinkers of the nineteenth century all ridiculed this naive recourse to culture heroes. On the other hand, the eighteenth-century thinkers might have found the recourse to such entities as "historic evolution," "processes of development," and "sociohistoric forces" to represent the reintroduction of occult metaphysical categories into the explanation of human realities. To be sure, as has often been pointed out, the beginnings of nineteenth-century historicist and "developmental" thinking can be found in Burke and even in Turgot, Condorcet, and others. Rousseau himself acknowledges a kind of cumulate progress of the "sciences and arts" which makes man's situation progressively worse.[11] Yet, basically in projecting social change and social transformation, they could envision this only as the work of conscious human beings, however extraordinary these human beings might be. In Chinese political thought, there had also been the assumption that the normative good society could only be actualized by cultural sages, but in the Chinese cultural sphere the sages most often did derive their sagelike

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quality from a cosmic source. The cosmos remains the source of values. If they were not gods, they were certainly godlike. Rousseau would have his legislator be godlike, but the most he can ascribe to him is extraordinary genius and "greatness of soul." Thus Rousseau's attitude toward his legislator contains admixtures of suspicion, which has much to do with his insistence that the legislator be the legislator and not the executor of the fundamental laws. As the executor of laws, he could never "avoid the danger that his views as man might detract from the sanctity of his work."[12] The legislator may both transcend and not transcend the effect of an evil environment. Yet whatever the ambiguities of the legislator's nature, Rousseau's hopes, such as they were, for the actualization of the good society were completely contingent on the existence of such legislators and on their ability to bring their greatness of soul to bear on social reality. It is no wonder that he has been called a pessimist in spite of his hopes for Corsica and his lukewarm constitution for Poland. It must be noted that the hopes of his encyclopedist opponents for progress were also contingent on the hope that the enlightened vanguard would somehow be able to achieve positions of power.

With the strong emergence of the notion of an impersonal, progressive history after the French Revolution, one witnesses the transformation of both the Rousseau strain and the engineering strain in modern thought. They are, as it were, both "historicized." History itself, it was now proclaimed, would bridge the gap between the way things are and the way they ought to be. Yet both strains continue to find expression in quite different images of historic progress. Technology itself, instead of being a transaction between the technologist and the material on which he works, becomes "the process of technological development." "Industrialization," "economic forces," "technological development" become the dominant categories in what might be called the technicoeconomic version of inevitable human progress. The Rousseauan strain, however, also finds its own transformation in those versions of history which treat history as primarily an ethical drama. Despite all of Hegel's reservations about Rousseau, his account of human history as a march to the realization of freedom as he understands that term is essentially an account of history as a spiritual-ethical drama. When one looks at the work of Marx from this perspective, one finds that what makes him so fascinating is that his later work seems to create an impressive synthesis of both strains. While sharing with Rousseau the view that the progress of the arts and sciences in its broadest sense as technicoeconomic history has been the occasion of enormous injustice and exploitation—of the alienation of man from man—he nevertheless finds it "objectively progressive." He is thus able to regard the progress of industry with both the somber indignation of a Rousseau and the complacent self-congratulation of those who marvel at man's technical genius. He would have us believe, as it were, that Satan himself may carry to completion the work of the Lord. His good society is, of course, not the same as Rousseau's Spartan utopia. Individuals in that society would reap the fruits of both the arts and the sciences even while embodying the social virtues dreamt of by Rousseau. These social virtues would moreover, no longer depend on the religion of "*la patrie.*"

However impressive this Marxist synthesis may be, I would urge that it has proven unstable among his followers. The question of how history as ethical drama relates to history as technicoeconomic development and as "rational-

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ization" of society remains unresolved. Rousseau has not yet been fully reconciled with St. Simon.

It might also be added that the historicization of eighteenth-century thought has itself not been entirely successful. The need for legislators has not wholly vanished. The great nineteenth-century accounts of human history had by the end of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries become subject to serious doubts. There was the growing feeling that, in order to realize the hopes projected by these various schemes of historic progress, one would no longer be able to rely wholly on the operation of the larger impersonal forces. Human intervention, whether by revolutionary vanguards or social engineering elites, would be necessary to guide the historic processes along their proper channels. This may not have amounted to a full rehabilitation of the great legislator of the Enlightenment nor a full retreat from faith in the forces of history or "development," but it would indicate that the role played by the legislator in Enlightenment thought had not been rendered entirely superfluous.

Rousseau's vision was also to be transformed in other ways. It must first of all be noted that he was himself deadly serious about his commitment to the ideal of the small polity as exemplified by Sparta, republican Rome, and Geneva, however much he may have doubted the possibility of restoring this ideal and however much he accepted the notion of mitigating the evils of large societies. The size of these polities was a necessary if not sufficient condition of their ideality. We can fully grasp the meaning of the general will, one and indivisible, only when we think of a face-to-face assembly in a public place. It is only in this context that we can really think of a citizenry which directly represents itself, of a citizenry undivided by regional interests and wide divergences in the conditions of life, and of a government without the need of a complex bureaucracy. Patriotism in this situation is what a citizen feels when he surveys the entire city from the town acropolis. Here one clearly sees the love of *la patrie* as a collective symbolic entity and the love of the people as a community of equals, as two sides of the same coin. One might imagine something similar in peasant communities which could adjudicate their affairs under an oak tree or perhaps even in a territory as large as Corsica where conditions of life were simple and roughly equal. None of this, however, seems at all applicable to the large territorial state. The complex division of labor, the emerging of selfish interests whether of region or class, the need for vast bureaucracies and vain intelligentsias all relate to the size of societies. Rousseau himself would have rejected the possibility of the realization of his ideal in a society as large as France. Yet the attempt was to be made and the attempt was to have significant consequences. In the words of Habermas, "The pupils did not respect the limits of this model's applicability which the teacher himself had drawn; they wanted to bring about a republican constitution in a large state by revolution; or more precisely, to carry the revolution which had already broken out toward its goal in accordance with this plan."[13]

One aspect of the transformation may, however, be said to have succeeded. The religion of city-state patriotism had in fact been transformed into the religion of nationalism. It has proven possible to direct the religious sentiments of vast masses of man toward national symbols, even in large territorial states. Men have been willing to die for their country, whatever the size and nature of

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its polity and social system. Men have been able to enjoy their moments of exaltation and glory, take pride in their sense of "identity" and sense of solidarity against the outer world (an integral aspect of Rousseauan patriotism) within the framework of vast nation-states as well as within the city-states of antiquity.

The ideal of the sovereign general will of the people has not made such an easy transition. One must suppose that Rousseau would hardly have accepted the Jacobin notion of a leader or a vanguard group which virtually embodies the general will of large societies even while obliterating the crucial distinction between the leader as legislator and the leader as administrator. He would no doubt have regarded this idea as a license for tyranny. Robespierre himself would probably have rejected such a notion of virtual representation before he attempted under the goad of circumstances to realize the reign of virtue in revolutionary France. Yet the idea of a general will of the people, one and indivisible in its common ideals and common interests, led by a vanguard absolutely incapable of doubting the purity of its own devotion to public virtue, was to have a considerable future. The idea takes on a particular potency when "people" and "nation" become coterminous in the confrontation with a surrounding world of enemies. In the Leninist transformation of Marxism, we also find the notion of the general will incarnate applied to the idea of class rather than the idea of the territorially based people-nation.

Representative democracy of the Anglo-American type has, on the whole, not drawn its theoretical justification from Rousseau, and Rousseau again would probably have rejected its claims not only because of his general rejection of the idea of representation but because he would never have conceded that a countervailing balance of "selfish" group and individual interests could ever constitute a general will. Like Hannah Arendt, who was not particularly kind to Rousseau but who thoroughly shared his antique civic ideals, he would never have conceded that a state devoted to the pursuit of individual happiness conceived of in hedonist "consumer" terms could ever realize his dream of social virtue and public happiness. Certainly the engineering approach to human problems has reached its very acme in American society. Yet the religion of nationalism and the blending of nationalism with a faith in the virtues of a people properly led has not completely disappeared as a strain even in contemporary American culture.

If it is true that Rousseau might not have accepted many of the subsequent transformations of the kind of thought he represented, are we at all justified in speaking of a "Rousseau strain" in the contemporary world? Judith Shklar in her *Men and Citizens* states: "Rousseau is not rousseauisme. The way in which philosophy may or may not become operative ideology is interesting enough but it is a part of social history not of political theory directly."[14] To this I would say that the great thinkers cannot be as completely dissociated from responsibility for the unexpected consequences of their thought as this would seem to imply. The fact that the followers are often so enthralled by the master's compelling vision that they do not, in the words of Habermas, respect the limits he has drawn would still imply that the vision plays some role in shaping their thought and behavior. The subsequent career of the master's ideas also leads to meditations on the limitations and blindspots of the master himself. Furthermore, having a somewhat less purist view of political theory, I would still see

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the later career of the ideas as part of the history of thought as well as of social history.

In spite of the overwhelming predominance of what I have here called the engineering approach to the human condition (modified by nineteenth-century historicism and evolutionism) in the modern Western world, the moralist strain of modernity represented by Rousseau has not disappeared. To be sure, the sense that some of our fundamental problems are inherently moral—or spiritual-moral—and that they will not readily yield to engineering solutions is by no means confined to the Rousseau strain. Yet, by and large, the contemporary Western world continues to live within the framework of the premises of modernity established by the Enlightenment. The Rousseau strain continues to survive in the "New Left" kind of radical pathos. This derives its sustenance not only from the observation that the engineering approach has not solved all our socioeconomic problems, but from a belief that the immediate moral quality of human beings and of relations among human beings (the moral again is conceived of largely in terms of moral sentiments) is what in the end is of ultimate concern and the further belief that the progress of the arts and sciences, far from advancing the morally meaningful life, has led to its further deterioration. The radicals still remain fiercely committed to the view that everything depends on politics. Their hopes are still fixed on that redemptive act of revolution which will somehow bring about a reconciliation of modern technological society with the vision of the morally meaningful community. Revolution must play the role of the Great Legislator. Some have even convinced themselves that the revolution can be goaded into being in a recalcitrant society only by terror. While they may believe that their ultimate aim is to remove the "obstacle" which stands in the way of creation of a society in which human beings will relate to each other in terms of utter transparency, their real sense of life's meaning probably derives from the fierce belief in their own righteousness, the sense of shared adventure and common risk. This "revolutionary ethic" itself probably becomes the operative morality of such terrorist groups.

When we turn to the world outside the West, we find that the Rousseau strain, with all its later transformations, remains very much alive among the articulate intelligentsias and political leaders of this world. It is, of course, true that it was by its technological and sociotechnological ascendancy that the West first forced its attention on this world. It is also true that the "pragmatic" engineering approach has found its adherents in this world and may find even more adherents in the future. Yet contrary to the expectations of many American theorists of economic and political development, the intelligentsias and political elites of those societies have not always played their assigned role as strategists of modernization and "nation-building." As of the present, it can be said that the influence of modern Western thought still remains dominant among these elites, but the Rousseauan strain in this thought has not lost its attraction. The operative ideology (to the extent that one can speak of the presence of ideology) of many of these elites is based on the notion of the people-nation led by an ethical vanguard which effectively embodies the higher general will of the people and which leads the people to internalize ideals of socialism, justice, virtue, and devotion to *la patrie*. The vanguard may take on the form of a national single party or of a military elite, but in the forefront of its consciousness one often

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finds an overwhelming concern with fostering the religion of nationalism and with what it regards as the moral basis of a just society. There can be no doubt that Marxist-Leninist Communism in both its Soviet and Chinese forms has been an important influence particularly in its conception of the vanguard party and its stress on a nationalized economy. What is more, it is quite clear that we are no longer dealing here with a sharp opposition between an antitechnological Rousseauan strain and a total reliance on the "progress of the arts and sciences." None of these elites are against "modernization." As nationalists they certainly appreciate the relevance of technology to national strength, particularly in the form of modern weaponry. They probably genuinely believe that they are creating social structures which will in the long run be favorable to modernization. At the same time, they will not easily be diverted from what might be called their immediate religious-moral concerns (concerns which also relate very directly to the legitimation of their power) by arguments about technological and sociotechnological "rationality."

Although not particularly attracted by what I have here called the operative ideology of many countries in the non-Western world, I feel that something must be said about some of the deeper impulses which may lie behind it. In most of these nations there has by no means been a complete rupture with the traditions of the past. In most of these traditions—whether those of large civilizations or those of tribal cultures—the religious-moral diagnosis of the human condition has remained alive and as suggested previously, the Rousseauan strain of modernity is, in the end, more continuous with such traditions than the engineering approach. To the extent that tradition has decayed and to the extent that modern anthropocentrism has taken hold, nationalism as a religion comes to fill a vacuum in present religious-moral needs as well as to provide legitimation for authority. Nationalism is thus not simply instrumental to the ulterior goal of "modernization." To the extent that there has been a decline in older moral values among the people themselves, the effort on the part of an "ethical vanguard" to create a new social morality, a new general will, by political fiat is again not simply instrumental to modernization goals. It serves very urgent present needs. None of this is incompatible with the observation that the ideology may serve the power aspirations and hubris of the leaders themselves. One may also doubt whether the ideology is adequate to the problems it addresses. The problems themselves are, however, real enough.

As a "watcher" of contemporary China, it has been my impression that all the questions considered here have been highly relevant to the history of the People's Republic. To be sure, there is the presumption that China operates within the framework of an all-embracing unitary ideology. It has, nevertheless, been my own feeling that the tension between the strains discussed above has been very much present within the envelope of China's Marxist-Leninist-Maoist ideology. In a previous essay an attempt has been made to explore the degree to which the Maoist doctrine of the "Cultural Revolution" might be understood in terms of the Rousseau strain as here defined.[15] In carrying on this exploration I was simultaneously struck by the degree to which Maoist cultural revolutionary themes also corresponded to certain particular features of traditional Chinese moral and political thought. Could it be that in some peculiar fashion the Rousseauan *problematik* resonated more with certain aspects of traditional moral-pol-

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itical thought in China (in spite of enormous real differences) than to the traditional moralities of many other societies? This is a subject well worth exploration, but the exploration will not be attempted here.

Since Mao's death there has been in China a noticeable turn in the direction of what I have here called the engineering approach. Ultimately, however, the problems raised here remain unresolved for China as for all the rest of us.

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